

The meaning of educational change in post-Soviet
Tajikistan:

Educational encounters in Badakhshan

How educators in an in-service institution in rural
Badakhshan understand and respond to educational
change

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Abstract

This thesis examines educational change in the province of Badakhshan, Tajikistan, where the processes of change are framed in the post –Soviet transition from communism to incipient forms of democracy and from a command to market economy. It focuses on the encounter of an international development agency, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), and a government, in-service, teacher training institution, the Institute of Professional Development (IPD). That interaction is also contextualised in a very particular relationship: the head of AKF, the Aga Khan, is also the spiritual leader of the Badakhshani community. Hence, development and faith perspectives intersect in this change process (es).

Using a qualitative approach and a case study design the research makes visible educational change as it impacts structures, institutions and individual educators in post-Soviet Badakhshan. It draws on the work of Birzea (1994), Venda 1991; 1999), Foucault (1972; 1980) and Gramsci (1971) to understand how institutional transformation processes are mediated and contested as the IPD changes from a government body to a 'public-private' one.

The research finds that notwithstanding the faith connection, institutional transformation involves ideological, epistemological and hegemonic contestations as well as new learning. Responses include ambivalence, resistance, adaptation, appropriation and reclamation of educational and institutional change through a recasting of social and professional relationships and a mastery of international aid discourses. The study reveals that there is not 'a change process' but, instead, change(s) processes that are multiple, interlinked, iterative, simultaneous and sometimes chaotic. It argues that the change contexts, the macro and micro narratives that attend it and the processes of educational transformation are better understood through a re-conceptualisation of familiar notions of educational change(s), tradition and development. It concludes that the role of faith is central to how development is defined, responded to and appropriated in this little-studied context and contributes to the knowledge of international development across cultures.

Declaration and Word Count

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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List of acronyms/abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| AKDN | Aga Khan Development Network |
| AKF | Aga Khan Foundation |
| AKU | Aga Khan University |
| BERA | British Ethical Research Association |
| FBOs | Faith based organisations |
| FSU | Former Soviet Union |
| IBET | Improving Basic Education in Tajikistan |
| IED | Institute of Educational Development |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INGOs | International Non Government Organisations |
| IPD | Institute of Professional Development |
| MSDSP | Mountain Societies Development Support Programme |
| NGOs | Non Government Organisations |
| PDC | Professional Development Centres |
| PDT | Professional Development Teachers |
| RED | Regional Education Department |
| RNGOs | Religious Non Government Organisations |
| SIP | School Improvement Programme |
| WB | World Bank |

Chapter 1: Situating the study: A sense of place, time, and presence

1.1 Introduction: A sense of time

This study looks at educational change in Badakhshan, a remote, rural, mountainous province of Tajikistan, a small, Central Asian country which had been a part of the Soviet Union. In common with other 'countries in transition' as they came to be called,¹ Tajikistan's 7 million mainly Muslim² population found themselves in the midst of sweeping political and economic changes when the Soviet Union collapsed. Incomes dropped as the currency was devalued and inflation soared. Social services declined as supplies dwindled and professionals were forced to leave their occupations to seek more lucrative forms of income generation. Infrastructure such as transport, communications and power stations, deteriorated from lack of maintenance. In Tajikistan, independence in 1991 was followed by a devastating civil war (1992-3/7)³ that exacerbated the situation further. Not only was the state not meeting its statutory obligations but it could no longer protect its citizens. The rule of law could not be upheld.

Twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Tajikistan continues to grapple with the complexities of the transition from communism to some form of democracy and from a command to a market economy, and with entry into the neo-liberal, New World Order⁴ that prevailed in the last decade of the 20th century. The country is also no longer sheltered from the effects of globalization,

¹ The term is now applied more broadly to include transition in South Africa, (McLeish and Phillips 1998) and other countries in the developing world.

² Most Tajiks are Sunni Muslims, so called because they follow the Quran and the 'Sunnah', (tradition) exemplified in the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The other major sect of Islam comprises the Shia Muslims, who believe that guidance from God was continued after the Prophet's death, (632 A D) through designated 'Imams', the first of whom, Aly, was believed to have been designated by the Prophet himself.

³ The full-scale war ended in 1993 but the peace accord was not signed till 1997. Hostilities continued well into 2000.

⁴ The term 'New Policy Agenda' was used by Moore 1993 cited in Hulme and Edwards, (1997) to indicate this New World Order.

as it was under communist rule. The Tajik people are having to make an immense ideological shift in their world-view as they move from complete state provision of services to and control over their lives, to almost no state support, especially in the social sectors. They absorb new (capitalist) ways of conceptualising civic, economic and political life, contend with national, international and local self-interest and struggle to build in all sectors the essential technical skills needed for survival in the New World Order (Ginsburg, 1991; Martinussen J, 1997; Stromquist and Monkman, 2000a; Stromquist and Monkman, 2000b). Finally, as they work to define and build on their Tajik (as opposed to Soviet) identity and find their national voice in the international arena, the citizens of Tajikistan are also rediscovering their place as Muslims in the plurality of perspectives that is Islam today (Khalid, 2007c; Roy, 2000). The post – Soviet transition⁵ is not yet over.

1.1.1 Locating the study: research focus

Taking account of the above factors, this thesis explores the meaning of educational change as experienced by the staff of a government in-service teacher training institute, the Institute of Professional Development (IPD) in Badakhshan. It does this through an examination of the encounter between the IPD and the Aga Khan Foundation (www.akf.org), an arm of the Aga Khan Development Network, (www.AKDN.org) as they engage in bringing about educational change through institutionalising innovation at the IPD from a state to a semi-autonomous institute. The AKDN is a private, non –denominational, international development network of agencies which work in social, cultural and economic development amongst some of the poorest communities primarily in Asia and Africa. The Aga Khan Foundation's (AKF) mandate is to work with governments and communities in health, education and rural development. The AKDN's development efforts are characterised by its multi-faceted approach to

⁵ For ease of reference the transition from communism to incipient forms of democracy and from a command to a free market economy that characterises the changes in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) countries, will be referred to as the post –Soviet transition.

poverty alleviation and self-directed development and its long-term commitment to areas it goes into (See chapter 4 section 4.5).

The processes of educational change in this particular context are unusual in a number of ways. First, they are contextualised in the profound political, economic and societal upheaval of post – Soviet transition and the Tajik civil war. Second, the changes are imposed on the communities by the transition, and mediated by the presence of international organisations⁶ and interests. Third, they are being facilitated by the AKDN whose head, the Aga Khan is also the spiritual leader of the majority of the (Ismaili Muslim)⁷ Badakhshani community⁸. Hence, development concerns and faith perspectives coalesce in this particular change process. My study looks at how educational change is brought about in a complex setting in which three such different ideologies and cultural systems (communism, capitalism and Islam) meet and, sometimes, confront each other. It considers how communities in general and the education community in Badakhshan in particular, responded to and negotiated these changes in their professional as well as their personal lives.

Like other Muslims in Central Asia, the Ismailis had kept the practice of their faith alive if interiorised, during the Soviet era. Their reconnection with the Aga Khan and the global Ismaili community was effected in the wake of the civil war. The AKDN's intervention in Badakhshan, led by the AKF, was mounted in response to

⁶ Institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), primarily concerned with overseeing the country's transition to a market economy and democracy, also strongly influence educational policy. As well as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and the Country Assistance Strategy, both of which include investment in education, the World Bank signed an Education Improvement Programme in 2003 through which it committed 24.19 million USD to education in Tajikistan over five years. The IMF 'conditionalities', under which further assistance was provided included reforms in the educational sector particularly a rationalisation of provision. Tajikistan is now piloting (among other initiatives) a move to per capita funding for education to this end. (See Letter of Intent between IMF and the Republic of Tajikistan: January 12th 2006: www.imf.org/external/np/loi/2006/tjk/011206.pdf).

⁷ The Ismaili Muslims are Shia Muslims who follow the Aga Khan, as their Imam. See Chapter 4 section 4.2).

⁸ The AKDN's programmes are conducted 'without regard to faith, origin or gender' (<http://www.akdn.org>) although it usually has a stronger presence in those countries where the Ismailis reside as minorities.

the Badakhshani leadership's request for assistance in the face of the humanitarian crisis caused by the civil war (1992-3/7). Hence, development concerns and faith perspectives coalesce in this particular change process. I chose the term 'encounter' to describe the coming together of the different ideologies and cultural systems that manifested themselves in the AKF-IPD educational change processes.

1.1.2 Why 'Encounter'?

I use the term 'encounter' here to capture that initial sense of meeting the unexpected that the term suggests which marked the early engagement between the AKF and IPD. Originating from old French 'encontre' the term suggests a meeting of adversaries' although in later English usage it also signified a brief, chance, casual meeting. While the AKF and IPD encounter cannot be described either as adversarial or brief, (the two institutions went on to develop a sustained, if sometimes strained, engagement over time) the initial wariness between them, captured in chapter 6 in particular, is symbolic of an encounter between different, perhaps even alien perspectives, processes and institutions in relation to education. The modern usage of the term in psychology dates from 1967 and is attributed to the work of Carl Rogers (1902 -1987). The psychoanalyst Piera Piera Aulagnier, uses it in her theories to indicate the coming together of two elements, fortuitous or not, that are going to have an impact on each other. She:

accorded the notion of encounter a more fundamental meaning, that of a permanent rapport established between the body and the psyche, or between the subject's psyche and that of the mother. The relation between the psyche and the world is born at the time of the primordial event of the encounter. (Gale dictionary of psychoanalysis).

My attention to the term was drawn in its use by His Highness with reference to the meeting of the three systems: communism, and Islam. His use anticipates a negotiation of a changing relationship between the three ideologies and hints, perhaps, at the uncertainty of the outcome. It may also suggest a tension that needs to be addressed and resolved. As a post modern anthropological construct, the term refers to the perspectives from which 'we' regard the 'other'.

Given that the Badakhshanis were emerging from a position of retrenchment under Communism, the Aga Khan may well have been using it in a broader sense, suggesting a meeting space between the classic 'us' and 'them' divide.

1.1.3 The researcher and research questions: a sense of presence

My association with Tajikistan began as Education Programme Manager for the Aga Khan Foundation (1998-2002). In that capacity I worked with the regional education department on reforming the education system, and hence with the teacher educators at the IPD, as well as with teachers. My team comprised expatriates, experienced local educators and young local university graduates.

A number of questions persistently pre-occupied me at that time. This was a context in which we as AKF staff were the outsiders both ideologically and culturally: how could we reach common understandings of what was needed in the education sector? The collapse of the USSR had brought drastic changes to people's lives, with respect to both political stability and economic security. What did educational change or student-centred methodologies mean when there were issues of whether there was enough bread in homes and enough heating in schools for children?

These broad concerns, constantly with me as I worked there, translated into the following research questions on my return to the U.K.

'What does educational change mean in the context of the profound societal (political, ideological, economic and social) change in post – Soviet Tajikistan?'

And,

'What can be learnt about such change through exploring the transformation of an indigenous educational institution?'

In particular, I wanted to focus on those educators whose professional responsibility it is to effect improvements in the educational system, chiefly through the up-grading of serving teachers and other educators in the system. How do such educators respond to and negotiate educational and societal changes both imposed and invited? How do such changes affect their professional and personal lives? How and when is continuity promoted or reinforced, and how and when is change facilitated when an educational institution is itself undergoing change while responding to changes around it?

I have another connection with Badakhshanis: we share a common faith though not a common culture. That lent a particular meaning to my work there though it was the more pragmatic offer of a job that had attracted me there in the first instance. It also provided the impetus for this thesis. I mention these connections for their methodological importance. I needed to continuously reflect on my own place within the research to help situate my knowledge, interpretation and analysis and also to understand how the respondents situated me in the study (See Chapter 5 sections 5.2; 5.2.1).

1.1.4 Badakhshan: a sense of place

Tajik Badakhshan⁹ (see map below) borders Kyrgyzstan and Western China in the north and West. To the south, it is separated from Afghanistan by the river Panj and from Northern Pakistan by the Pamir mountain range.

⁹ Badakhshan spans both sides of the river Panj and hence the reference to 'Tajik' Badakhshan to distinguish it from Afghan Badakhshan. Henceforth in the study I will simply speak of Badakhshan.

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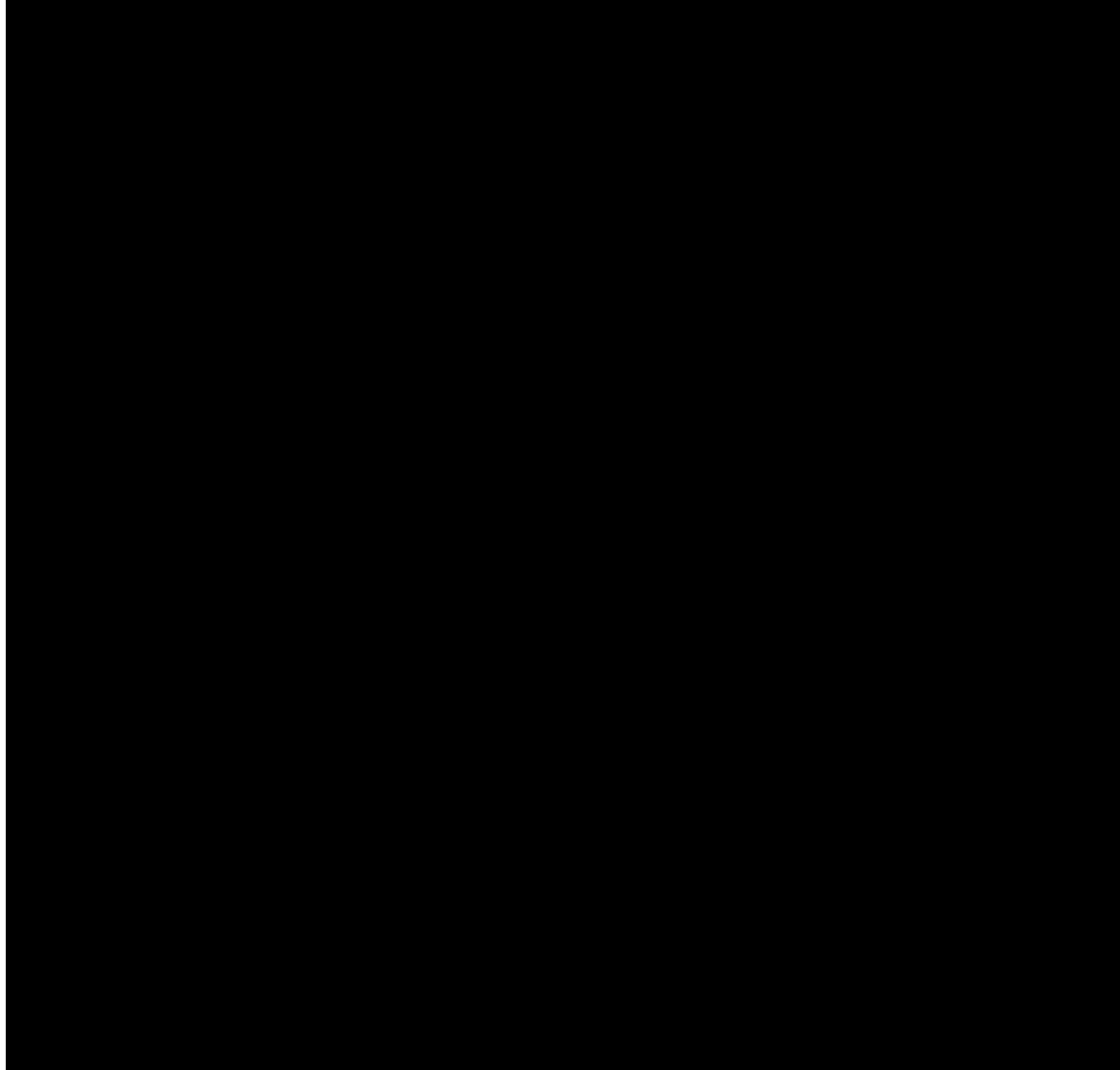


Figure 1: Map of Administrative Divisions

Physically, this is an inhospitable environment, with range upon range of steep, barren, rocky, mountains rising from narrow valleys with fast-flowing rivers offering hardly any cultivable land. During Soviet times the region produced just 15% of its food needs, the rest being flown in from other parts of the Soviet Union. Badakhshan was linked to the outside world by only two roads (to Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, and Osh in Kyrgyzstan)¹⁰ which are often blocked by avalanches in the severe winters and by landslides as the snows melt

¹⁰ It is now linked to China and Afghanistan by a road and a series of bridges across the Panj respectively.

in the spring. However the inhospitable mountains did offer the Ismaili Muslim communities partial sanctuary from past persecution by the Sunni Muslims.

Chapter two traces the development of Central Asia from a people linked by cultural and linguistic ties through the Soviet Socialist Republics and finally the nation states that exist today. What follows here is a brief description of Badakhshan's place within Tajikistan.

The territory of Badakhshan was added to Tajikistan in 1925 when Tajikistan itself was an autonomous part of the newly formed Uzbek republic.¹¹ In 1929 the boundaries of Uzbekistan were re-drawn and Tajikistan gained the status of a full Soviet Socialist Republic¹² with Badakhshan as an autonomous region or 'Oblast' within it (Niyozov 2000: Keshavjee 1998). The province has its own legislative assembly, but remains an integral and indivisible part of Tajikistan.

Badakhshan comprises seven districts: Darvaz, Vanj, Shugnan where the capital city Khorog is located, Roshtkala, Roshan, Ishkashim and Murghab and the municipality of Khorog which is the regional capital. It is home to six small Eastern Iranian ethnicities known as Pamirians (Shugnani, Roshani, Wakhi, Ishkashimi, Yazgulami and Bartangi) who speak their own distinctive languages

¹¹ Historically the Tajiks trace their descent from the ancient Persian and Iranian cultural group of the Eastern Iranian –language speakers. In the 9th -10th century they were a part of the Sammid dynasty which, together with the Chalip of Bagdad, developed Bukhara as a centre of learning. In the 13th Century they become a part of the Mongol empire as did the rest of Central Asia and in the 14th century they form a part of the Turkic rulerTamarlane's empire. By the late 19th century (1860-1900) Northern Tajikistan came under Russian empire influence and was acceded to it by the British-Russian commission of 1895 for fear of British designs in the region (Azimov 1997: Schmenann 1993 cited in Keshavjee 1998). The South was annexed by the Emirate of Bukhara. After the Soviet revolutions the Tajik lands were first incorporated into a Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (19210 which included Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, part of Northern Turkmenistan and Southern Kazakhstan. before becoming a part of the new Uzbek Republic in 1924.

¹² However, the two main Tajik cities of Sammarkhand and Bukhara were retained within Uzbekistan robbing the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic of its intelligentsia and creating a source of tension between the two nations to this day.

and live in the respective different valleys.¹³ The region is also home to the Kyrgyz who live in Murghab and are Turkic in terms of ethnic origin with their own distinct language. Shugnani is widely used as an interethnic language amongst the Pamirians except for Vanj, Darvaz and parts of Ishakshim where Tajik is spoken and Murghab which is largely Kyrgyz-speaking. Tajik and Russian often form the lingua franca between these diverse groups, both linked and separated by physical location, language, beliefs and ethnic origins.

The emergence of all the Central Asian nations was characterised by a salience of religious and ethnic identities (Khalid, 2007c). In Tajikistan, such identifications were exacerbated during the civil war (1992-3/7) which coalesced along regional, and ethnic as well as political lines, (see Chapter 4 section 4.4), The Badakhshanis allied with the losing side. The region's population of 100,000 increased by 50%, as internally displaced Badakhshanis fled 'home', putting enormous pressure on its resources. Infrastructure, housing and particularly food supplies were running out. The community turned to the Aga Khan for help and the AKF, essentially a development agency, was mandated by him to respond to the humanitarian crisis first and then engage in development initiatives.

1.1.5 Locating the study: the field site

I chose to focus my research on the IPD for a number of reasons. It is a site that reflects the encounter of communism, capitalism and Islam in action. In its own transformation as well as in its day-to-day operations the IPD demonstrates the processes of educational change at the institutional level. Its state mandate of upgrading existing teachers in the province means that it stands at the confluence of educational policy and practice; local, national and international

¹³ The Wakhis inhabit the Wakhan corridor in Ishkashim district which they share with the Ishkashimis. The Bartang valley is a part of Roshan, the Yazgulam valley is a part of Darvaz. The majority of Vanjis and Davazis are Sunni Muslims: the majority of the Pamiris are Ismaili Muslims.

agendas; as well as tradition and innovation. And through its interaction with the AKF it encounters globalising influences, connects and contends with particular faith-based perspectives on development and is exposed to notions of autonomy and intervention as well as new ways of operation and governance within institutions. Finally in its staff it has a combination of state-trained, experienced educators and the AKF-trained younger generation of aspiring Tajik educators.

A focus on the two institutions, the AKF and the IPD, gives the enquiry an added dimension. The Badakhshanis' reconnection with the Imam and his development institutions, the AKDN has shaped their experience of transition and globalisation as well as their understanding of development issues. The faith –dimension, underscores– and complicates - the IPD-AKF encounter.

1.2 Methodology: challenges and opportunities

The first challenge to such a study was how to conceptualise it. Research on educational change is usually framed within stable societies (Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 2001; Fullan, 2003). There are no well-developed theoretical frameworks for an examination of post – Soviet transition. The few scholars who do focus on educational change in post – Soviet societies draw from the insights and experiences of Eastern and Central Europe. Their conceptualisations, while immensely insightful, locate development and progress in terms of Europe or the European Community (see Chapter 3 sections 3.2.1; 3.2.2). Central Asia does not follow the same development trajectory. Besides, while the role of the INGOs and the NGOs is beginning to be analysed and the debates about globalisation to be engaged, again there is no study that looks at the dialogue or interaction between those overseeing or helping with the reform in the Former Soviet Union (usually an NGO) and those who experience it and/or implement it at the grassroots levels. Some excellent work has been done on Kyrgyzstan's education system which served to inform my work. Reeves's study of reform at the American University of Kyrgystan (2004), in particular helped me in that it focused on an institutional experience of intervention for reform. Both her views

as well as those of Amsler (2007) on the role of externally-initiated innovation were instructive and corroborated much of my own findings. But again the focus here is at the tertiary level. The role of Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) in development is also just beginning to attract some attention, and is still situated at the periphery of development discussions (De Cordier, 2009; Haynes, 2006; Kniss and Campbell, 1997; Lunn, 2009; Marshall, 2001).

A further challenge was the absence of a well-developed body of literature on educational change at the middle level in Central Asia and more specifically, on Badakhshan. There is no study I am aware of that focuses directly on in-service education system in the new nations of Central Asia. Most enquiries centre either on national educational issues, tertiary education, or on particular programmes usually at the school level, although there is some material on the reform of higher education (Heyneman and deYoung, 2004; Tomask, 2004). Their analyses define the success or challenges of past Soviet educational practices, policies or ideologies within the framework of, and their 'fit' with, the present Western driven attempts at reform. My study is therefore also informed by the research (PhD) work of other scholars on Badakhshan over the last ten years (Keshavjee, 1998; Niyozov, 2001).

Drawing from these sources and building on them, I conceptualised the IPD-AKF encounter situated within the meta – narrative of transition and international interventions but with a focus on (educational) institutional change encounters informed by the faith aspect of a community's culture. I drew on the work of scholars from the Former Soviet Union, Birzea (1994) and Venda (1991; 1999) who analysed the phenomenon of the post-Soviet transition as well Foucault (1972; 1980) and Gramsci (1971) whose analyses of discourse, knowledge-power and hegemony helped to explain the processes of educational change within this very particular context.

I chose a case study design (Hammersley, Gomm and Foster, 2000; Robson, 2002; Stake, 2000a; Stake, 2000c; Yin, 1993; Yin, 1994) which enabled me to

look at the phenomena of changes in a bounded, holistic unit, a 'case', (Robson, 2002; Stake, 2000a; Yin, 1993) using 'thick' description (Geertz, 1973) to study them in a natural setting, taking a chronological approach. I used multiple data collection tools and explanatory frameworks in making sense of my findings. My prior engagement with AKF's education programme in Badakhshan meant that I drew on my personal knowledge and experience in interrogating, corroborating, and analysing data that I collected. For a while I was a part of the phenomena under study: the insights I acquired then are an inevitable, and, I hold, a necessary part of my engagement with the research (see Chapter 5 section 5.41; 5.4.2). In this I am guided by (Gomm and Hammersley, 2000) who attests: that in social science:

most case studies feature descriptions that are complex, holistic and involving a myriad of not highly isolated variables, data that are likely to be gathered at least partly by personalistic observation; and a writing style that is informal, perhaps narrative... (Gomm 2000, p. 24)

and by Coffey, (1999) who argues for a recognition of the researcher as a self, not just in the field-work stage of the research but also throughout the enquiry and maintains that the presence of the self is not a problem to be 'managed' but rather an asset that marks a very particular epistemological engagement with the study. My position is also in keeping with the wider acknowledgement that the researcher is an important part of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Coffey 1999; Kvale 1996; Schofeld 2000) and that s/he comes to the work with her/his history, social attributes, knowledge and meanings as well as emotions and personalities. I strengthened my methodology by using the notion of reflexivity from ethnography to help me understand better the implications of my prior engagement with the field.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

Chapter One: has introduced the context: the setting, the actors and the sites of study. It poses the main questions.

Chapter Two: looks at education in pre-Soviet, Soviet and post – Soviet Tajikistan, contextualising it in the meta –narratives of Islam, Soviet colonisation and transition respectively. It traces developments in the Soviet and post Soviet era - the challenges, achievements, tensions and transformations that education has undergone. It establishes the importance of context, of viewing educational change within a larger frame of political and societal change. In looking back at change in the past, it facilitates a comparison with post-Soviet change discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. This lays the groundwork for understanding the data in chapters 7 and 8 and facilitates its interpretation in chapter 9 which draws on the patterns that characterise imposed educational changes in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

Chapter Three: brings the focus back to the present and examines the current attempts to theorise the process of post –Soviet transition, and educational change within it. The stages and processes of transition from euphoria to near paralysis to readjustment (Birzea 2004; Mitter 2003;) and the change from the 'old' to the 'new' which included the co-existence of the both for a while, (Birzea 2004; Venda 1991) are identified as characteristics of the FSU transition. Models of educational change in the FSU (Polyzoi, Fullan and Anchon 2003) and the role of the international community in mediating the transition, all of which form the macro – context of educational change, are also considered. Honing in on the community undergoing change, the chapter considers informal institutions and the role of culture in development at the local level as well as some of the concepts from the work of Foucault (1972; 1980) and Gramsci (1971) used to analyse and make sense of the findings. In focusing on the national, international and local aspects of educational change in this context, the chapter underscores the complexity of the phenomenon under study and concludes by delineating the conceptual framework used for this research.

Chapter Four: moves away from theorisation to narrative and considers educational change from the perspective of the local actors. It focuses on the antecedents of change, the Badakhshani community, the AKF and the IPD, and establishes the particular faith connections that obtain between Badakhshani

community and the AKF. A brief look at the civil war which precipitated the humanitarian crisis in Badakhshan that brought the AKDN to the region ends the chapter. The chapters on the political, social and cultures contexts and history of the actors of change, both at macro and micro levels also serve to explain the methodology used to study this complex phenomenon of educational change in Badakhshan through institutional change. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Five: focuses on methodology, justifying a qualitative study which uses a case study design with elements of ethnography (reflexivity) to account for myself as a part of the data for the research. It describes the processes of data collection and data analysis, and sets out the analytical strands used to interpret the findings.

Chapter Six: draws on the Badakhshanis' experience of the civil war and the arrival of the AKDN and what that meant for them. It delineates the accounts of the reconnection of the community with its spiritual leader, His Highness the Aga Khan, and examines the broad ideological and practical implications of the presence and the programmes of the AKDN in general. The data reflects both the despair generated by the civil war and the revival of hope ushered in by the AKDN giving substance and evidence to Birzea's notion of 'Krisis' discussed in Chapter 3. It also demonstrates the beginnings of debate and contention as AKF and local educators focused on educational reform.

Chapter Seven: discusses the encounter between the AKF and the IPD in bringing about educational change in the system through the IPD and looks at what this meant in practice for the institution. It focuses on the processes of the transition within the IPD from a public in-service institution to one that operates more like an NGO, and examines changes in management and operations. It makes visible the attendant areas of growth and tensions as well as the power relationships that this shift entailed. It reflects the tensions and opportunities inherent in the co-existence of the old and the new (Venda 1991) as new systems, structures, management policies and practices are introduced and

confront more established ideological norms and cultural relationships and networks.

Chapter Eight: looks at resistance and appropriation. It features the changed situation at the IPD as AKF leadership was localised and the Badakhshanis took full charge of their own development. The data reveals the displacement of the expatriates, the re-emergence of local hierarchies and of agency within new structures. Using Foucault (1972; 1980) and Gramsci (1971) to understand what was going on, the chapter follows IPD's push towards self sufficiency and the tensions between continued traditional hierarchies and emerging agency. It delineates the development of a transformed IPD, part public, part private with an arm for income generation and asks how the institution sees itself in relation to its constituencies in Badakhshan and its wider 'clients' that include the national government and Afghanistan.

Chapter Nine: draws the discussion of the micro-narrative of educational change within the meta-narrative of transition. The work of Birzea, (1994) Venda, (1991; 1999), Foucault (1972; 1980) and Gramsci (1971) as well as notions of faith, inform the explanation of the co-operation, contestations and transformations that characterize the IPD-AKF encounter delineated in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. The chapter suggests a re-casting of the familiar notions of development and faith, through the emergent concept of 'deep alignment' that I offer as a contribution to the theoretical debate about development within faith communities.

Finally, *Chapter Ten* looks back at the initial questions and offers closing reflections on the meaning of educational change in post –independent, Muslim Tajikistan, on this study itself, and on possible future areas of research.

1.4 Conclusion

As this introduction suggests, the context for the research is extremely complex. At the macro level, the process of educational change is framed in the encounter of the two diametrically opposed ideologies, Communism and capitalism as well as Islam. Further, at the level of the case under study, these processes of institutional development and change are negotiated between 'actors' (the IPD and the AKF) who are connected to each other through the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan, lending a faith aspect to this encounter. This, as the thesis will demonstrate, influences how the two institutions relate to each other. The next three chapters examine these complex, contextual factors that shape this case study.

Chapter 2: Education in pre-Soviet, Soviet and Independent Tajikistan Formation, challenges and transformation

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the context of educational change in Tajikistan. After a brief consideration of pre-Soviet (Muslim) education, it looks at the education policies and practices, systems and structures which transformed educational provision during the Soviet era. It seeks to analyse some of the factors that underpinned the development and implementation of those policies and through the literature reviewed, to gain an understanding of them. The focus thereafter shifts to the post-Soviet transition and implications of that pivotal change for the education sector.

2.2 Education in pre-Soviet Central Asia

Before first the Russian (1750-1860s) and then the Soviet conquest (1918-1922/3), the lands now comprising the Central Asian countries of, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were not nation states¹⁴ but peoples, linked together by kinship affiliations framed within in lifestyles (nomadic or settled), languages and culture as well as geographical location.

The region was home to rich, diverse and complex cultural patterns and, a religious plurality, with beliefs and practices ranging from indigenous shamanism and animism to Nestorian Christianity and Buddhism and Islam (Foltz, 1999).

¹⁴ The Soviets created these 'republics' around 1924, to allay nationalist aspirations, but the boundaries were carefully drawn up to ensure that none of the republics could ever function as independent entities either economically, or politically or culturally. The khanate (city state) of Khiva and the emirate of Bukhara, both now a part of Uzbekistan, remain, to this day, distinct linguistically and in their social organisation and kinship affiliations, from the Uzbeks. Bukkhar and Sammarkhand are ethnic Tajiks while Khiva has closer links to the Uighurs.

Islam was introduced at the beginning of the 8th century with the Arab conquest. Conversion was gradual and undertaken through:

a dual process of localising Islam and Islamising local traditions (which) led the communities to see themselves as innately Muslim. Local customs were sacralised, and Islam was made indigenous. For most people, there simply could not be a distinction, let alone a contradiction, between Islam and local customs (Khalid, 2007b p. 22).¹⁵

By the 9th century Muslim geographers considered Transoxiana (the land across the Oxus) to be an integral part of the Muslim world. In the next two centuries its cities were linked to networks of Muslim culture and learning and it had produced two of the six authoritative compilers of the Prophet's life and sayings. Indeed, between the 11th and 14th centuries the region's cultural and intellectual achievements were at their height. Two of the most influential jurists in Islam, the philosopher-scientist al-Farabi, known as 'the second teacher' (after Aristotle), and the philosopher Ibn Sina or Avicenna, both figures of pivotal importance to Muslim civilization, scholarship and thought in the so-called classical age of Islam, were Central Asian (Khalid 2007b p. 25). The city states of Bukhara, Khiva and Sammarkand were famed as centres of learning. The area was also at the crossroads of global trade routes, an area of considerable economic and political influence. However, the Mongol invasion in the early 13th century disrupted both the cultural and religious traditions as well as trade in the area and:

...undid the hegemony of Islam in the political realm (Khalid 2007b p. 27).

The development of the maritime routes from Europe to India and America and the consequent shift in global trade marginalised the region, leading to a decline

¹⁵ Khalid (2007) argues against an interpretation of Islam as a monolithic faith whose 'true' or 'real' identity is thought to be rooted either in the way it is practiced in the Middle East or in its scripture alone, and hence ignoring the cultural and political realities in which Muslims live. He points out that there are tensions between what he calls 'customary' and normative Islam, and indeed within these as well, that lends an internal dynamism to the faith which is ignored in Western interpretations that essentialise Islam. Ascribing all Muslim behaviour as originating from the scriptures diverts attention away from any geo-politics or social justice factors in how Muslims relate to the West. The events of 9/11 he argues, have intensified this hegemonic discourse of a 'clash of civilisations' creating a simplistic dichotomy that casts Islam as negative and the West as positive without further qualification.

in global economic activity and an eclipsing of its cultural and scholarly achievements¹⁶. Central Asia regained prominence when the Russians, smarting from their Crimean defeat, decided to conquer it in the mid 19th century (1750-1860) in rivalry with British interests in the area, and triggering what is commonly referred to as the great game¹⁷ (Anderson, 1997).

Education in the region focused on the learning of the Quran by rote and on basic literacy and numeracy taught in the makhtabs (Muslim religious primary schools). The madrassahs, (Islamic seminaries or secondary schools) additionally taught history, astronomy, mathematics and poetry (Dickens, 1988) and offered vocational training using the master-apprentice approach (Khalid, 2007b; Shorish, 1984).¹⁸ Students were therefore equipped to become Muslim clerics, obtain a position in government or prepare for future trades. Teachers, like most students, were invariably male and the figures of authority and learning in the communities. Their role was to promote Muslim ideology and cultural heritage, and to act as moral guardians and role models for the young (Khalid, 1998).

2.3 Education under the Soviets

Scholars are polarised in their assessment of the impact of first, Russian and later, Soviet colonisation of Central Asia. On the one hand, the Soviet legacy (1917-1990) is one of reviving the economic activities of the region and linking it to markets, as well as the introduction of universal education, based on the principles of access for all, gender equity and impressive levels of higher

¹⁶ It has to be noted that this is from a global perspective in relation to Europe: trade, travel, cultural exchanges continued between the nations now comprising the Central Asian countries and their immediate neighbours.

¹⁷ The term was popularised through Rudyard Kipling's use of it in his novel 'Kim' (1901).

¹⁸ In the more sophisticated urban areas the secondary or higher schools often included a full range of curricular subjects (Gleason, 2004). This contributed to a broad but shallow literacy, with girls seldom going beyond the primary level. Most authors agree that the quality of education was in decline with rote memorisation and recitation being paramount and functional literacy being largely confined to the native languages.

education uptake (Johnson, 2004 p. 25). Social services were good and universally accessible, and employment was guaranteed by the State. The introduction of trade unions, local soviets and political propaganda both mobilised the population into the new institutions and taught them new ways of thinking about politics through film, theatre and the written word. Such institutional channels served to bring the communities into the orbit of the new order and, together with the indigenisation of Soviet power led to the development of a new political class by the early 1920s.¹⁹

On the other hand, under both Russian and Soviet control, there were brutal repressions of the prevailing religious and traditional ways of life. Social networks and religious and linguistic affiliations that might have enabled the Central Asian communities to lean towards the greater Turkic peoples or the wider Muslim world were systematically destroyed (Anderson, 1997; Khalid, 2007c; Roy, 2000). The Central Asian 'republics', created to appease nationalistic demands (1924-1929) were always subject to measures designed to keep them under Soviet control (Roy, 2000).²⁰ A system of economic dependence was fostered by preventing region-wide diversification of production and by drawing 'republic' boundaries designed to create semblances of nationhood that were 'national in form and socialist in content' (Stalin 1934, cited in (Johnson, 2004).²¹ The development of the region, therefore, was almost always a matter of furthering a tacit political agenda, and visible benefits had their *raison d'être* in invisible webs of control.

¹⁹ The Russians set up both Russian schools for Russian settlers and 'Russian – native' schools in place of the Quranic schools to acculturate the local elite's children into the Russian language, values and way of life. The Soviet agenda was couched in the language of liberating the people from religious and class fetters (Johnson, 2004 p.26).

²⁰ A typical example is the way transport worked. The Central Asian region acquired airports. However, the major centres, Tashkent, Dushanbe and Almaty, were linked only by flights that went through Moscow, enabling the central authorities to effectively monitor and control all movement between the artificially established republics.

²¹ Post-Soviet Tajikistan paid a heavy price for this dependency when budgetary support from Moscow ceased, and more particularly when neighbouring countries closed their borders to protect their nations from the ensuing Tajik civil war (1992-1993/7) following independence in 1991.

Soviet colonisation brought:

...new forms of political control and new forms of knowledge to justify it (Khalid 2007b, p. 35).

The establishment of universal, accessible education likewise needs to be understood in the broader context of Soviet colonisation in the region. In the familiar rhetoric of the coloniser, education was presented as a vehicle for modernising the (inferior) 'others' (Said 1978) but was in designed to undermine their culture and prevent alliances with other broader Muslim movements (Gleason, 1997b; Johnson, 2004; Khalid, 2007c; Massell, 1974; Shorish, 1984). Enforced school attendance compelled the nomadic Kazakhs and Kyrgyz to adopt a sedentary life, curbing freedom of movement and association between communities (Balzhan, DeYoung and Suzhikova, 1996). The introduction of the allegedly easier Cyrillic script effectively rendered the religious leaders semi-literate and disconnected the young from their Muslim (Iranian or Turkish) past. The closure of Quranic schools deepened the separation between the communities and their religious and literary heritage as well as access to prevailing Muslim political thought ²² (Shorish, 1984). Moreover, as Dickens, (1988), points out, if the atheist state was all too aware of the power of symbols such as the Arabic script being used as a rallying point for pan-Islamism, it was equally wary of the spectre of pan-Turkism.

Even the emancipation of women, symbolised by their unveiling and the prohibition of underage marriages, polygamy and the payment of bride price, had its basis in the breaking of traditional patterns of socialisation. The principles of universal suffrage and of gender equity in education were designed to create a new 'surrogate proletariat' (Johnson, 2004; Kandiyoti, 2007; Massell, 1974) which might be grateful and loyal to the new regime.

²² However, this did not end religious practices, particularly in the rural areas where Islam continued to be taught to children using the traditional (pre-Soviet) methods through illegally set up makhtabs and madrassas or through the family (Atkin, 1992).

2.3.1 The new education movement in Central Asia

The imperialist and subsequently Soviet education agendas and the systematic dismantling of Muslim education did not go unchallenged by the Central Asian communities. Resistance took a variety of forms from a refusal to send children to the Russian schools to the ostracising of women who obeyed the unveiling edict as well as the Basmachi movement (1917-1926) that erupted in overt violence. In educational terms, the local response to the Russian and then Soviet ideas was partly shaped by the Jadid movement begun in the 19th century as a pan-Islamic, socio-cultural movement and which offered an alternative vision of modernisation.

For a brief period the movement offered what could have been the way forward and bridging the distance between Russian education and Muslim identity and culture in the form of the Jadid or 'new education' movement. The Jadidists of Central Asia were a part of a broader movement among the intellectuals of the Muslim world to link the tenets of Islam with modernity (Khalid, 1998). They sought to modernise²³ Muslim education, expanding its religious core to include subjects such as history and geography and working to improve pedagogies, standardise and systematize learning, and establish literary indigenous language studies.²⁴ Their response to both colonisation and modernisation was to find a way of up-dating school curricula while retaining the core Islamic values and practices, and make the school the focal point of all education including religious education (Allworth, 1973; Khalid, 1998; Shorish, 1984).

The movement gained influence rapidly in Central Asia offering both an intellectual and a political strategy that addressed the new realities with a reform agenda that sought not just a revitalised, Muslim approach to knowledge, but also to gain for the Jadidists' own societies, what they saw as the building blocks of

²³ They saw the pursuit of progress and particularly the acquisition of modern knowledge as enjoined on them by Islam (Khalid, 2007a).

²⁴ For the Jadidists, literacy was functional, rather than sacred. It facilitated access to the sacred texts and hence liberating them from the monopoly of the scholars. The advent of print media in Central Asia at that time underscored the necessity of universal, functional literacy.

European power: organisation, order, discipline, and knowledge. In particular, they saw modern knowledge (science, technology, and industrialisation) as being at the heart of the Europeans' ability to command wealth and military might. They wanted their own societies to become modernised so as to engage with the Europeans as equal partners, conscious that failure to do would leave them further behind than they already were²⁵ (Khalid 2007 p. 42).

In the process, the Jadidists managed to antagonise both traditional Islamic and Russian interests. Their promotion of literacy as a functional skill rather than a sacred activity was, as Khalid (2007b) notes, deeply subversive of the power of the religious scholars, who claimed the right to read and interpret religious texts. It challenged their status both as the custodians of culture and of knowledge.²⁶ The Russians, on the other hand, saw the first signs of nationalistic tendencies in the development of indigenous languages and the retention of a religious orientation through education.

The Jadidists allied with the Soviet revolution in 1917, and for a brief period (1920/1), were able to put their reforms into action in Bukhara. The promotion of universal literacy resonated with the agenda of using education to embed communist ideology amongst the people. But the Soviets saw this as an alliance as a purely temporary concession while they were establishing control: religious and nationalist aspirations ran absolutely contrary to their premises of a new world order. Religion came under sustained attack from 1926 onwards under the agendas of modernisation and the liberation of the 'backward' peoples of the

²⁵ Khalid cautions that this was no mere Europhilia on the part of the Jadidists but an acknowledgment that European societies were more advanced due to their superior knowledge. And the fear of their own peoples falling behind if they did not modernise. In time, the Jadidists also came to see Europe as an imperial power that oppressed others, rather than a civilisation that showed the path to enlightenment.

²⁶ For a full, and nuanced treatment of the Jadids see Adeeb Khalid's 'The politics of Muslim Cultural Reform' *Jadidism in Central Asia*. (1998). He re-casts Jadidism as not just a political or nationalist movement, recognising it as 'centred on the competing claims to cultural authority-the authority to create and interpret culture' (Khalid 1998 p. 5).

region.²⁷ By the end of 1929 almost all mosques, the (Jadidist) Muslim schools and other religious institutions and figures were destroyed. Jadidism, now branded as a nationalist bourgeois movement, was brutally crushed, and with it, the opportunity for a creation of a dynamic, modern Muslim education system. However, like much else in Central Asia, while the Jadidists' visible presence was eliminated, their influence was not (Khalid, 1998).²⁸

Jadidism's relevance for this study lies in its ability to mount a response to external, highly intrusive but modernising influences which the communities could not ignore. That response was premised on the argument that the acquisition of knowledge, the pursuit of progress, and even the emancipation of women were absolutely consistent with and within the framework of the foundational tenets and values of Islam. This has important parallels with the situation of the community in Badakhshan as it undergoes post –Soviet transition mediated by the international community and framed in the economic effects of transition and globalisation. At a more fundamental level, the Jadidists' demonstration of the dynamism within Islam that enables a fusion of the traditional with the modern and which emphasises education, resonates strongly with the Badakhshani (Ismaili) view of Islam as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

2.3.2 Soviet Education: A Mixed Legacy

By the end of the Soviet era (1991), education in the republics of Central Asia, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, was distinguished by the fact that it was universal, virtually free at all levels, hierarchically and vertically structured, information-centred and vocationally oriented to meet the job market in a state-planned economy (Cummings and .Dall, 1995; Sayer:, 2002). The fundamental 'truths'

²⁷ Kalid (2007) notes that the aims of the Soviets and the Jadidists had much in common - the modernisation of the community, the emancipation of women, the emphasis on education – but they arrived at these aims from very different perspectives: one rooted in the fundamental tenets of Islam, the other embedded in the firm belief that all religion was a barrier to progress.

²⁸ Other forms of resistance were also mounted against first the Russians and then the Soviets, such as the Basmanchi revolution (1916-1931). The Jadidists are important for this study because of their focus on education

emanated from Marxist-Leninist ideology and nothing else was felt to be necessary with respect to philosophical thought or debate (Birzea, 1994; Feldman 1989).

Curriculum development, educational policy and textbook production emanated from pedagogical and subject specialists in Moscow (Niyozov and Bahry, 2006). The system worked towards the creation of the 'New Soviet Man', 'Homo Sovieticus', through education, across ethnic, geographical and cultural differences in the name of egalitarianism. (Feldman, (1989); defines the 'New Soviet Man' as being epitomised by his ability to put loyalty to the collective or the state above both personal comfort or gain, and even above family ties, as well as the attitude towards labour (Feldman, 1989). He holds that since Marx had made labour the defining characteristic of human nature, then the attitude to labour was central to the conceptualisation of the true New Soviet Man. Ideally such a person showed selfless dedication to the building of socialism and unquestioning loyalty to the state, essential in an empire as diverse as the Soviet Union. He worked tirelessly, not for material benefit, but for the sheer pleasure of the work itself. In fact, the creation of such an 'identity' was necessary to ensure the primacy of state goals and interests above those of the individual, or of any potentially segmenting group affiliation such as clan, ethnicity, religion or national.

As well as Marxist-Leninist ideology, schools emphasised secular values, science and technology, atheistic doctrines and those elements of local culture that fitted Soviet educational agendas. Hence traditions and literature that criticised kings and religion, 'folklorist' elements such as local dance and music, and local languages were promoted. In practice, however, 'Soviet' translated into 'Russian': to get anywhere in the party hierarchy it was necessary to know, behave and value Russian. (Anderson, 1991; Balzhan, DeYoung and Suzhikova, 1996; Niyozov, 2001).

It is a moot point whether Soviet education was designed to promote the interests and needs of the diverse peoples of the Soviet Union or was a version of Russian

imperialism (Balzhan, DeYoung and Suzhikova, 1996). Teachers were the mediators of the three cultures: Soviet, Russian and local, as well as the moral guardians of the community (Medlin, Cave and Carpenter, 1971; Niyozov, 2001).

As Niyozov comments:

Tajik teachers were predominantly brought up in large families, in rural areas, and were caught in the complex interplay of the ideologies of Communism and Islam. They studied and taught in the schools with Tajik as a medium, and were brought up with a consciousness of their own traditions and rich cultural heritage. Tajiks often used this heritage to stand against their denigration by some Russians, as well as by their own communist leaders, who as part of a demonstration of loyalty to Russians and Communism, put down their own culture and teachers (Niyozov 2001, p.108).

These caveats notwithstanding, the Soviets did create a modern education system in Tajikistan, where nothing comparable existed before.

That system comprised general schools which often covered primary, secondary and higher secondary education together, as well as specialised secondary schools or 'gymnasiums' and finally vocational schools where students could go on completion of the compulsory schooling. Some general schools also had a particular focus such as Mathematics or English. There were also specialist schools called 'Lycee' and 'Gymnasiums' which offered a more rigorous curriculum than the general schools.²⁹ At district level, there were subject specialists and inspectors who guided and monitored the work of the schools, and who in turn reported to the Regional Educational Departments (REDs) and through them to the Tajik Ministry of Education. Pedagogical Institutions at national level were responsible for the production of the curriculum and the prescribed textbooks, both of which originated from Moscow and neither of which were often relevant to the lives and the contexts of the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union.³⁰ By the end of Breszhnev's regime most teachers were proficient in their subject areas and trained in pedagogy.

²⁹ For a fuller treatment of the Soviet education system, see: Long D. and Long E., (1989);

³⁰ During my time in Badakhshan and in interviews with head teachers for this study the issue of a centralised curriculum that taught the Badakhshanis about Russia but ignored their own flora and

The up-grading of teachers was the responsibility of the in-service institutes of professional development, one of which is the focus of this study. These operated nationally and regionally in each republic, including Tajikistan (Askorov, 1970; Lee, 1988; Long and Long, 1999). However, the quality and content of teacher education and teacher support was superficial³¹ (Webber, 2000). In the final years of the Soviet Union the major flaws of teacher education were obvious: ideological dogmatism and methodological formalism as well as a weak material and technical base. Teacher morale was low and the pedagogy and instructional approaches were poor. The profession was losing its status (Wilson, 1992). However as I argue in Chapter 4 section 4.3.3, it would be simplistic to dismiss Soviet education as merely 'doctrinaire' and propagandist and Soviet citizens as passive products of it.

In common with other parts of the USSR, Tajikistan's education system went through a series of 'reforms'. The revolutionary fervour for promoting 'emancipatory' education in the 1920s was replaced by a child-centred pedagogy, and then by the more authoritarian teacher – centred approaches during the Stalin era. That, in turn, was followed by a move towards the more European notion of didactic instruction in the 1960s and 70s, and back again to child – centred pedagogy during the Perestroika years and the emergence of teacher-centred innovation movements in the 1980s (Dunstan, 1992; Ekloff and Dneprov, 1993; Holmes, Read and Voskresenskya, 1995; Long and Long, 1999; Popkewitz, 1984; Webber, 2000). However, despite rhetoric about modernisation and reform, the system was inflexible and stagnant discouraging initiative and innovation. Its sole purpose was to instil obedience, docility, compliance and loyalty to the state (Kerr, 1990; Wilson, 1992). But this should not detract from the scope and scale of Soviet achievements in education in a region where, previously, only the elite few were literate and basic education comprised the rote learning of the Quran. Education was completely transformed from a

fauna, geological features, culture and history was often brought up as one of the disservices the Soviets did to the diverse communities that comprised the USSR.

³¹ My respondents spoke of inspectors who came in only to ask 'Why are you wearing a blue and not a red tie?' and the courses at the IPD were largely lectures read at the teachers (2004).

predominantly male, religious oriented, master -apprenticeship undertaking for a select few, to a secular, universal, systematised, standardised, state-provided service for all children and young people (Anderson, Promfret and Usseinova, 2004). According to Dickens, 1988), nothing comparable has been achieved in a Muslim country in Asia. By the end of the Soviet era (1990), in Badakhshan for example, there were 310 schools covering every remote valley, with approximately 5,000 teachers for 55,000 students. Literacy rates were at 95% and the teacher student ratio was 1:10. Almost one third of the working population was engaged in education (personal communication 1998). The next set of reforms in education were precipitated by the collapse of the Soviet Union itself, forced upon the system by the transition from communism to capitalism and from a command to market economy: the post –Soviet transition.

2.4 Education in post – Soviet Central Asia

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was a transformative event for the states that comprised it. An entire political, ideological and economic system crumbled, leaving in its wake both initial euphoria, as nations either regained their former independence or came into being for the first time, and chaos, as they struggled with the complexities of the political, economic and social transformations that they found themselves having to deal with. (Amsler, 2007; De Young and Balzhan, 1997; Popova, 2002). The transition from communism and planned economies towards democracy and a market economy was both complex and traumatic. The peoples of the Former Soviet Union (FSU) found their state, states and status unrecognisably altered as they became independent nations with their own constitution and legal systems, lost budgetary support from Moscow and re-configured their place in a politically altered region. Post – Soviet transition has entailed a move from the concrete, well-established, well-ordered reality of communism through diverse processes and degrees of societal changes, uncertainty and disorder towards an as yet undefined political framework. The processes of economic and political transition were neither as self-evidently inter-linked as was initially thought (Mitter 2003) nor a move

towards democracy, inevitable. Almost twenty years since it began, the transition is still being negotiated.

2.4.1 Post-Soviet transition: Major characteristics

Post – Soviet transition has been characterised firstly by its speed and comprehensiveness (Anderson, 1991; Balzhan, DeYoung and Suzhikova, 1996; Heyneman and De Young, 2004; McLeish, 1998; Niyozov, 2001; Polizoi, Fullan and Anchan, 2003; Polyzoi and Cerna, 2003; Polyzoi and Dneprov, 2003). The very fabric of society was changing, and no sphere of activity or set of people remained unaffected. Secondly, the process is one of moving from one ideological, political as well as economic position towards a diametrically opposite one,³² with the two systems, the 'old' and the 'new', sometimes co-existing even in conflict (Birzea 1994; Venda, 1991;). Thirdly, there is a strong presence and intervention of international organisations (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) in the negotiation of the transition, primarily in the political and economic sectors and subsequently in the social sectors as well (Polyzoi and Cerna 2003; (Mays, Polyzoi and Gardner, 1997; Silova and Steine -Khamisi 2008). The FSU transition forms a crucial context to educational change in Badakhshan for a number of reasons. Insofar as it necessitated the reforms themselves and embedded them firmly in changing economic and political changed realities, it required 'educational' change to become cognisant of ideological changes as well.³³ In fact, educational reform did not emanate from within the Soviet political or educational system per se: they were contextualised in much larger political and economic changes that amplified the impact and the direction of purely 'educational' change. The transition also legitimated the international community's intervention in the process which drove and dictated the reforms although that yielding up of the

³² Politically one may cite South Africa as undergoing a similar transition from apartheid to democracy. For the Former Soviet Union the transition was complicated by an equally radical move from a planned to a market economy.

³³ A good example of what this entailed is delineated in Amsler's (2007) study of how the discipline of sociology has changed in post-Soviet Central Asia.

reins of educational reform was already being contested a decade later. (Reeves 2004).

2.4.2 Implications for education

The immediate, practical consequences for the education system were financial. The loss of budgetary support from Moscow made the over-resourced and over-staffed education systems unsustainable. Salaries fell in value as economic systems collapsed, and teachers were often unpaid for up to five months. Those who were able to left the system. School supplies dwindled, infrastructure maintenance deteriorated, and user fees were introduced into a hitherto state-funded provision.

Secondly, the dissolution of the Soviet Union meant that the prevailing ideology of communism that had underpinned education had disappeared. Nations now sought to retrace their cultural pasts and to re-invent the 'New Soviet Man' into the 'patriotic citizen'. Curricula and textbooks were re-written and histories re-assessed. Russian declined in importance as a subject to be replaced by English and IT, reflecting the new reality of entry into the global arena. Teachers, hitherto considered custodians of community wisdom and guardians of the moral development of the young, found their status being steadily eroded (Niyozov 2004). Not surprisingly, they themselves had little faith in the robustness or permanence of the new world order which they were now required to promote. After all, communism had not endured and they saw no reason why capitalism would (Niyozov, 2004 p.46).

Thirdly, as with much else in the social and economic sectors, educational changes were directed by the international community. The World Bank, the IMF and the various NGOs neither fully understood the Soviet system of education and the ideology that underpinned it nor appreciated its achievements. They

simply dismissed it.³⁴ Their assessments of what the Former Soviet Union countries in transition³⁵ needed, were framed in the Millennium Development Goals and the globalised discourse of a market-oriented education (Amsler 2007; Silova and Steiner - Khamsi 2008;). As the next chapter discusses, external interventions are driven partly by the discourses of globalisation and partly by neo-liberal agendas and geo – political considerations. As Amsler (2007) observes, 'transition' or 'globalisation' as it is sometimes simplistically termed, has

specific forms taking root in postsocialist space – to with, new foreign policies of 'democracy promotion', capitalist triumphalism, and ideological hegemony, aid dependency and the rise of indigenous authoritarianism...(Amsler 2007, p. 29)

This calls into question the efficacy as well as the legitimacy of such engagement, and indeed its relevance to the issues that educators and communities are grappling with.

A decade into the post-Soviet transition, the challenges facing the education system were still enormous. Heyneman writing in 2004 suggested that they included:

- *Structure:* Soviet education was vertically organised and hierarchical, including a limited understanding of supply and demand principles with respect to higher education and vocational provision).
- *Financing;* both the lack of finance and unfamiliarity with the phenomena of 'not for profit' and 'profit' which adds corruption to financial collapse.

³⁴ In Tajikistan the head of the Academy of Science recalled how the international organisations had suggested that they simply sack all the experienced Academy staff and start afresh with new graduates because they would not come in with the sovietised view of research (perosna communication June 2006).

³⁵ The term was initially applied to the Former Soviet Union but has now come to include transitions in South Africa (Mc.Leish and Phillips 1998) as well as other 'societies in transition' (Mehbratu et al 2000).

- *Increasingly weakened social cohesion:* when functions, particularly financing, are devolved to local and district levels without any support, experience or training for those involved.

And finally, there remains the issue of public and private education and the question of how the states can balance equality of opportunity with economic realities that are steadily depleting the state school systems and giving rise to more expensive, demand - driven private education (Heyneman et al, 2004;p. 4).³⁶ To his list I would add a drain of experienced teachers as salaries dropped (Reeves 2004; Nyozov 2004; Mitter, 2003:); the sudden change in the role of the head teacher to include educational management, fund-raising and community mobilisation; the devaluation of grades and degrees as these are 'bought' rather than worked for; the lack of adequate, relevant, teaching and learning material and deteriorating school premises. (Nyozov 2004). Educational reform in Central Asia is characterised by:

- A shift from central control towards varying degrees of decentralisation, often comprising the devolution of financial, but not decision-making responsibility for educational provisions to the community (Mitter 2003).
- A move from state provision of universal education to the emergence of a mixed, public and private basic, secondary and tertiary education together with the introduction of user fees and inequities in access to schooling (Reeves 2004; Mitter 2003).
- The replacement of the concept of the 'New Soviet Man' by the particularity of each nation's ideal 'patriotic citizen' (Popova 2002). This involved the re-construction of national histories and the consolidation of the imagined and parcelled identities created by the Soviet regime, but now appropriated by the Central Asian governments to legitimize their positions (Roy 2000; Johnson 2004). Curricula in geography, literature, social and natural sciences were also re-written to reflect national particularities.

³⁶ Heyneman (2004) links educational reform inextricably and coherently with the wider issues of political, social and economic history, legacy and changes that are shaping the development of Central Asian nations at present.

- The change to the national languages as medium of instruction and the growing focus on IT and English.
- The appearance of religious-based schools and teaching.

Reforms, which are often piecemeal, are introduced in response to budgetary constraints, teacher attrition or conditionalities imposed by the World Bank and the IMF rather than because the system is ready for change.

2.4.3 Education in Badakhshan

In Badakhshan, as elsewhere in Tajikistan, changes in the education system have included:

- The reduction of compulsory education from grade 12 to grade 11 (to uniformity with other education systems globally)
- The introduction of English at primary level (where previously it was offered at secondary level only)
- The devolution of financial responsibility to schools themselves and their communities

The first two reforms were designed to comply with IMF conditionalities to rationalise and standardise education provision in Tajikistan in line with international systems. The decentralisation reforms reflected an inability to meet, and hence an abdication of, budgetary responsibilities rather than as a genuine devolution of power to local administrations.

Since 1992, almost all schools have been divided into natural-mathematical science, social science and general streams. The last accepts the students who cannot meet the criteria for joining either of the other two (Niyozov, 2001). Entry into secondary education is no longer automatic but subject to passing examinations. The regional government has introduced a 'readiness for school' class, since 1992 called the zero class to enable non-Tajik speaking

Badakhshani children to acquire proficiency in Tajik.

Schools are structured and run in much the same way as in Soviet times, headed by a director and two or three deputies depending on its size. Trade unions protect teachers' interests, but predictably, in these changing times they often exist in name only. Outdated Soviet textbooks are still used in the absence of updated ones, science is taught without the use of laboratories and high school leavers are often co-opted into teaching to replace qualified teachers. Head teachers use the sale of produce grown on school land, the hiring out of equipment such as sewing machines or tractors and the production of local crafts to generate income to maintain their schools. They mobilise community funds and labour through the Parent Teacher Committees which are also responsible for ensuring overall attendance. Funds are used to enhance teacher salaries, pay for repair material or provide essential services to the poorest in the community.

Despite these difficulties education is highly prized by the population and the regional authorities alike. It has the largest share of regional government expenditure. Students continued to go to school during the civil war in Badakhshan, and teachers stayed in their posts for up to two years without any pay (Niyozov 2004) after it. With the help of NGOs Badakhshan managed to sustain comparatively stable educational standards (Greenland, Arnold and Bertlett, 2005; Kuder, 1996).³⁷ The three youth structures that had been designed to socialise children into life and communist morality during the Soviet era, the Octoberists (grades 1-3), the Pioneers (grades 4-8) and the Komsomol (grades 9-11), are now replaced by the 'Akhtaron' (Stars) and 'Somonyon' (the Samamdis³⁸) to fit in with the new aims of Tajik society and students continue to aim to attain excellence and recognition through affiliation with them (Niyozov, 2001). The district administration comprises methodologists and two inspectors,

³⁷ Both are internal reports for the Aga Khan Foundation (available from the Foundation).

³⁸ The Sammanids ruled in the 10th century in the golden age of Tajik history and a time when scholarship, justice, plurality and trade flourished under their wise leadership. The current Tajik historiography venerates this period with the currency being called 'sommoni' and statues erected to Esmail Sommoni in the capital Dushanbe.

and this structure is repeated at the regional level. The IPD is charged with upgrading existing teachers, generating additional curriculum material and supporting teachers with pedagogical advice.

At the central level, the Ministry of Education is responsible for the overall strategic direction of the education system. The Institutes of Educational Research and the various pedagogical universities in the country offer a five year pre-service teacher training programme focusing on content and methodology. Pedagogical colleges also train primary school teachers. In Parliament, the Committee on Education and Science is charged with dealing with educational issues. There is a deputy Prime Minister who is responsible for ideology and youth policy and, finally a Chair of Education in the President's office (Niyozov, 2001). Figure 2 overleaf shows how the education is structured.

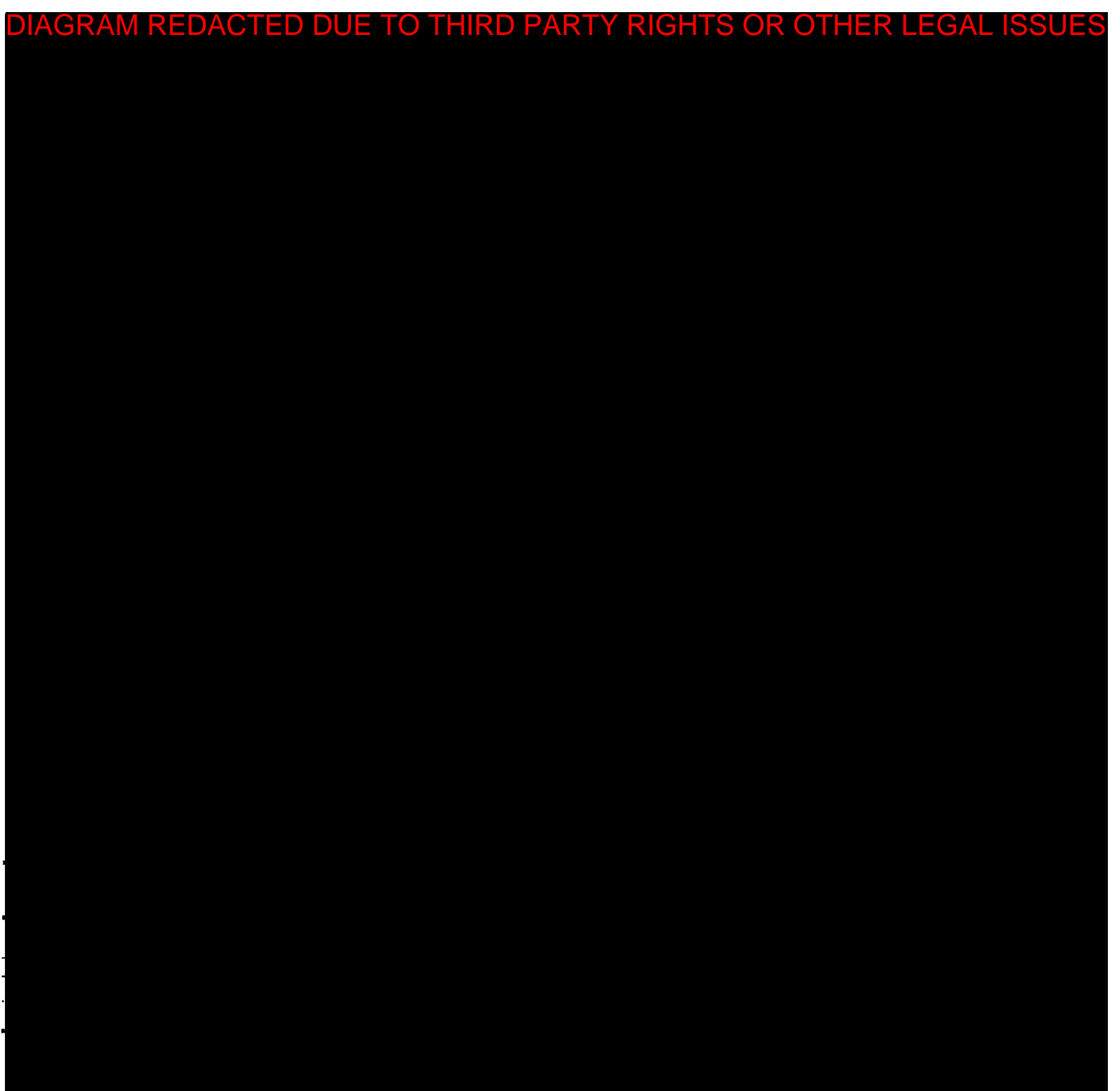


Figure 2: *Badakhshan* Education system

Educational research was not well developed during Soviet times. It was, and remains:

Possibly the least developed area (of research under the Soviets) formally guided by behavioural psychology and Marxist-Leninist positivist epistemology. (Niyozov and Bahry 2006 p. 211-232).

and focused on:

...quantitative statistical analyses and quantified sociological surveys, aimed at proving and verifying Soviet educational theories and models (ibid).

Khamis and Sammons (2007) speak to the importance of relevant, local research underpinning educational programme interventions to take due account of development contexts. This might account for the fact that national educational research does not as yet sufficiently inform the reform of the education system making it easier, at the outset of the transition for external influences to guide the process (see Chapter 3).

2.4 Conclusion

Up to the end of the Soviet period, the inter-relatedness of politics, culture and faith and education is clear, evident even in the Russian and later Soviet attempts to suppress local knowledge, languages and world views. However, subsequent educational reforms instituted in the post-Soviet transition appear to overlook both continuities: the older one between culture, faith and education and the continued connection with the Soviet era and ideology. The latter's enduring presence is manifest in the educational structures and procedures such as curriculum development as well as in classroom practices but is simply disregarded as irrelevant (Crossley and Watson, 2003). Yet the fact that Islam survived despite the imposition of a new and diametrically opposed ideology under the Soviets, bears witness to the resilience of deeply-held values and norms. It is logical, then, to ask, as this thesis does, whether a similar resilience might not attend attempts to dismantle an existing (education) system and

replace it with something external. However, the very fact of the collapse of the Soviet Union served to legitimise the neo-liberal perspectives on politics and economics and, by association, on the social sector (Silova and Steiner-Khamsi 2009; Amsler 2007). As the next chapter discusses, Post – Soviet transition provided licence to external entities such as the International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) to engage in economic and social sector change, without either reviewing their own premises of operation or taking due account of the debates about their efficacy or legitimacy as agents of transformation and change, often as globalising agents of change.

This lack of attention to cultural and ideological continuities is a significant oversight that has shaped the dialogue between those external agencies which wish to facilitate educational change in Central Asia and the educators there who strive to navigate the currents of change, muddled by different ideological perspectives and cultural values. It is an issue that came to occupy a central place in the present study, as the latter part of this thesis demonstrates.

The next chapter looks at the FSU transition as a recent political and economic phenomenon that is dictating educational change and in which this study is framed. As before, changes at the macro and micro levels are interlinked in a particular way and so need to be referenced with each other in this case study. To exclude the macro impact of the transition from a consideration of educational change would have provided an incomplete analysis and rendered context secondary to the case study whereas the context of educational change is what made this case interesting in itself.

Chapter 3: Contexts and counters: Towards theorising educational change in the Former Soviet Union

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the conceptual framework for this study. It examines emerging theoretical constructs that seek to address firstly FSU transition and then, more specifically, the educational change that this transition contextualises. It takes account of the intervention of the international community in post-Soviet development which is a part of the educational change context. The discussion is drawn together in a conceptual framework that locates the two main 'actors' in this study: the Badakhshani community and the AKF.

3.2 Educational change in FSU

Educational change has been variously theorised in terms (among others) of empowerment (Friere 1970), a struggle to gain a voice and a space in the national system (Apple 2004), as originating from a deeper, broader understanding of what teaching and learning involves and so how curricula might be differently conceptualised (Bruner, 1986) and how innovations may be brought into the system (Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 2001; Fullan, 2003).

In the FSU, however, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3) educational change is framed in more pervasive economic, ideological and societal changes triggered by the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was not initiated by an internal analysis of a system in need of reform, nor was it contextualised in a struggle against the prevailing political status quo. It was the result of events that transformed the basis of the political, economic and social order and was being carried out against a background of what Offe terms 'the dilemma of simultaneousness' of changes (Offe, 1991 cited in Mitter 2003). To understand the processes of

educational change in the FSU, therefore, it is important first to examine the transition that both necessitated and contextualises it.

3.2.1 Transition in the Former Soviet Union

It is important at this juncture to distinguish between 'transition' and 'transformation.'³⁹ Transition implies a movement, a process of changing from one state to another. It is incomplete and can be fast, slow, systematic, chaotic and all of these at different times during the process that leads from one state to another. The concept itself is not new. It is, in fact, the very essence of the human condition to be in a constant state of transition as we evolve and adapt to our natural or human environment (Adams, Hayes and Hopson 1976 cited in Birzea 1996). In the case of the former Soviet Union, the term denotes a movement by countries from communism to capitalism and from a command to a market economy (Birzea, 1994; McLeish, 1998).

Transformation, on the other hand, implies a change that is completed: it is an arrival point in the transition from one state to another. The transformation may have been sporadic, total, rapid or slow, but it signals a distinct – even radical – departure from the previous state, in this case, the collapse of the Soviet Union which:

...radically change(s) a social system and which has a political upheaval as its manifest starting point (Mitter 2003 p.77).⁴⁰

However, as I argue later in this thesis, this does not mean an end to change or to evolution. It simply means a recognisable milestone in an evolving system or institution or historical processes. Nor are the distinctions between the two terms

³⁹ The literature (Mitter 2003; Silova 2009) speaks of 'transition', 'transformation', 'reform' and 'change' of ten using the terms interchangeably.

⁴⁰ Mitter (2003 p.77) links transition to involuntary 'objective' dimension of historical shifts and 'transformation' to voluntary 'subjective' components of their driving forces. However he concedes that there is not a clear demarcation between the two processes which co-exist and overlap in come contexts.

as neat (Mitter, 2003). In defining transition in the FSU scholars emphasise processes and stages, the latter being differentiated by the responses to transition (Birzea, 1994; McLeish, 1998; Mitter, 2003; Venda, 1991).

3.2.2 Birzea's theory of transition

Birzea tries to construct a general theory of transition based on four lines of analysis:

- a) The passage from one social and political system to another,
- b) The anomie⁴¹ that accompanies that change
- c) The historical trend of the transition from communism to capitalism
- d) The processes of societal learning that support the change. (Birzea 1994 p. 9)

Juxtaposing the characteristics of closed and open societies (with respect to ideology, civil society, world view and economic organisation), Birzea comments:

....we are faced with two asymmetrical and mutually incompatible models, one of which must replace the other in a relatively short period of time (Bizea 1994 p. 12.).

He concludes that when seen as a transformation of the social and political systems,

..transition means a set of interdependent economic, political and social reforms (ibid).

The notion of interdependent reforms has been challenged: many post – Soviet countries have retained or reverted to more autocratic political configurations than at first anticipated (Mitter 2003; Polyzoi and Cerna 2003). Constitutional reform was closely followed by reforms aimed primarily at economic stabilisation and at arresting the precipitous decline in standard of living and quality of life

⁴¹ Birzea draws on Durkheim for the concept of anomie.

rather than actual movement towards a free market economy (Davlatov and Mulloev, 2000; Polizoi, Fullan and Anchan, 2003). Social reform efforts likewise were designed to check the deterioration of the existing systems and provisions, rather than engaging in a comprehensive, planned reform of the systems per se.

Birzea identifies a number of factors that marked the initial phases of the transition and that account for the state of near-paralysis that quickly followed the elation at the collapse of communism:

- a) The elimination of the overall regulator: the party – state was dismantled without a self –regulating apparatus replacing it
- b) The dissolution of the social pact – the welfare state had provided a level of social care; economic security and future stability in return for political and civil allegiance.
- c) The absence of plausible alternatives and even distrust in the new dispensation as the gap between official rhetoric and immediate observation, expectations and reality, promises and results widens and
- d) The paradoxical co-existence of the old and new structures employed in parallel without any political or moral distinction

Although transition brings with it a period of uncertainty and confusion, (Polyzoi et. al 2003; Mitter, 2003) Birzea also acknowledges the element of adaptation and regeneration that it elicits from individuals and communities. He maintains that transition also means:

the state of what the Greeks termed 'Krisis' a decisive state of re-appraisal, a moment of reflection, doubt and introspective assessment that occurred in the City periodically' Birzea (1994 p.18).

But whereas anomie is associated with disenchantment and paralysis in the face of the collapse of the prevailing order, Krisis marks a turning point in which the malaise of anomie is overcome by a mobilisation of individual and collective consciences and the seeking of:

....new certainties, new psychological references, new social codes, new sources of legitimacy (ibid).

Krisis involves not only questioning the fundamental meanings but also the 'emergence of new collective meanings' (Birzea 1994, p. 18). For Birzea it signifies that:

....the establishment of symbolic references and the re-construction of institutional foundations is part of what can already be called the culture of transition (ibid).

However, he does not elaborate on what it is that constitutes or triggers that turning point that lifts the people out of the state of anomie: he simply assumes that it occurs.

Birzea uses Hopson's seven stages of transformation to explain the response to transition⁴²

- (1) The initial shock which produces a reaction of stagnation (paralysis);
 - (2) Underestimation due to the fact that the effects of the change are belittled (denial);
 - (3) Discouragement and lassitude once reality is accurately perceived (defeatism);
 - (4) Habituation to the new situation (acceptance);
 - (5) Understanding the meaning of change (realisation);
 - (6) The search for solutions, particularly for a strategy to overcome the crisis (purposeful action);
 - (7) The end of the transition (transformation);
- (Hopson 1984, p.130 cited in Birzea 1994: my additions in parenthesis).

⁴² As Mitter (2003) points out, other theorists from the FSU have also demarcated the transition in terms of responses to its various stages. Drawing on historical analyses, Tomiak 2001 cited in Mitter 2003) identifies six phases: (dissolution of old order, envisioning of a new one, confrontation between conflicting visions, prolonged political impasse and introduction of piecemeal reforms, deepening crisis and imposition of the seemingly inescapable new order, retaining control of key political and economic elements in the name of social cohesion. Karpov and Lisovskaya (2001 cited in Mitter 2003), delineate two phases: a radical one (1990-94) and a conservative one (1994-now): the former marked by an interplay of destabilisation, innovation and an orientation to change, and the latter characterised by order and a partial return to pre-collapse patterns of social and political organisation.

Birzea's work is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it seeks to create an overarching framework that encompasses the political, economic and social systems. Secondly, it pays attention to historical context and societal responses. His insight into the stages of transition (the elimination of the overall regulator, the dissolution of the social pact between state and citizens and the mistrust of the new order) and, in particular his focus on the psychological stages of coming to terms with the new realities as well as his elaboration of the notion of Krisis are extremely helpful in understanding how the Badakhshanis experienced the civil war and the coming of the AKDN as is evident from the data in Chapter Six. Finally, Birzea takes account of the co-existence of the old and the new as an aspect of transition. Valery Venda using organisational theory, also examines the factors that come into play as the 'new' replaces the 'old' complementing and extending Birzea's ideas.

3.2.3 Venda's principles of transition

Venda's work (1991) is distilled into a set of principles that underlie the processes of how, to paraphrase Birzea (1994), two asymmetrical models interact so that one may replace the other.

Principle 1: in the initial stages of change, new and old structures co-exist, even if in conflict. Once change is initiated, efficiency under the old structure falls till it reaches the common ground with the new. A new structure emerges from that space when efficiency begins to rise again;

Principle 2: the further apart those structures are, the more difficult the transition. A bridge, with common features needs to be constructed between them to help with the transition;

Principle 3: if, as the old state begins to transform, its initial drop in efficiency is too steep (it is important not to slide too quickly) the system may enter a chaotic state and collapse, but if the fall in efficiency can be arrested early enough to prevent further erosion, then the system can stabilise;

Principle 4: the transformation process is not uni-dimensional, but is affected by multiple factors occurring at the same time. (Venda 1999 cited in Polyzoi et al, 2003 p. 29, 49-52, 112).

Venda's principles, while drawn from organisational theory and articulated in terms of systems, (Venda 1991) also constitute an important contribution to the understanding of transition. His focus on the old and the new state encapsulates the inherent tensions in the encounter of two divergent systems as is evident from the data in Chapters 7 and 8, and identifies the salient factors that help to address those tensions. His emphasis on the importance of bridging the old and the new through common ground, as well as his caution that the speed of the transition process needs attention, are evidence of a detailed analysis of the transformation process that complements Birzea's (1994) focus on the response to those processes. Venda's analogy of a bridge linking the old with the new helped to crystallise the notion of deep alignment discussed in Chapter 9 which comprises an approach to development and educational change that this thesis offers.

The strength of Birzea (1994) and Venda's (1991, 1999) work, which makes it highly relevant for this study, is that:

- They address the particular phenomenon of educational change within the wider societal, ideological changes that frame educational changes in the FSU. Birzea terms this 'societal learning' but as I discovered this encompasses resistance as well as appropriation
- They focus on the impact on people: Birzea's explanation of the stages of transition in terms of how people responded to it correspond closely to how the participants in this study saw their own situation during and after the civil war. In particular his notion of 'Krisis' captures very well the situation as it changed with the coming of the AKDN and the subsequent re-connection of the community with their spiritual leader (see Chapter 6)

- They take account of how the old and the new co-exist as well as how the latter replaces the former.⁴³ Venda's analysis of what occurs as the two systems co-exist is reflected in the data related to the transforming IPD where old and new systems, structures and practices co-existed, sometimes in conflict, sometimes in parallel (see Chapters 7 and 8)

But above all, the studies signal that there is now beginning to emerge, from within the former Soviet Union and particularly from the Eastern and Central European nations, scholarship which is able to provide the first analytical insights into the processes of transition and their impact on education. These accounts derive their authenticity and authority from the fact that they speak from first-hand experience: they are 'insider' voices. Birzea's analysis draws on the historical actuality of post – communist Eastern Europe and Venda on his Russian experience. Their familiarity with both the languages and the academic traditions of the West enables them to frame their conceptualisations and experiences in familiar discourses in a way that Central Asian academics are as yet unable to. This is not to say that the voices from Central Asia are silent: it is to say, however, that the barriers of language, research traditions and academic opportunities have been scaled by too few Central Asians as yet. And so, with a very few exceptions, those voices are also mediated through the research of outsiders. This is particularly evident in relation to educational change in the Former Soviet Union (Nyozov and Bahry, 2006).

3.2.4 Models of educational change in the FSU

Attempts at theorising educational change in the FSU have also been made from outside of it. Two such models of educational change are important. The first, uses Fullan's (2003) model of educational change to try to understand the

⁴³ However because these scholars hail from Eastern and Central Europe, they assume that the 'new' leading them towards Europe is better than the old. Central Asian development does not follow that same trajectory.

change experiences of the FSU, while the second takes Birzea's analysis of the process of transition in the FSU to construct a model. (McLeish 1998).

a) Fullan's three -phase model

Fullan delineates three phases of change: initiation, implementation and institutionalisation. He goes on to identify the characteristics that are important at each stage. Factors such as leadership, commitment and advocacy (for the change) are important in the first phase (Fullan 2003). Change agents' skills, capacity, resources, motivation and beliefs play a key role in the second phase together with the clarity and practicality of the policy, the development of local capacity and the ascribed roles of the government and other national agencies in supporting the implementation. Finally, building the innovation into more permanent structures, systems and policies, the provision of incentives, and constant upgrading with respect to training helps to consolidate and integrate the change.

Fullan's analysis is based on the premise that educational change is a matter of internal national policy. His focus therefore is on the factors that facilitate or hinder change when the issue is how best to embed large-scale educational change in relatively stable democratic societies with well developed civil society traditions and educational systems. When applied to the FSU countries still in transition, with all their particular issues of ideological, psychological, economic and social adjustment that this involves, the model is found to be too linear in its conception. (Arnhold 2003). It alone cannot capture the multiple, simultaneous, recursive nature of educational change in these countries in transition. In that context Venda's model has had far more applicability (Arnhold, 2003; Polyzoi and Cerna, 2003). Fullan's model progresses linearly: change in the FSU is erratic, sometimes circular and pervasive (Polyzoi et al 2003).

However, Fullan's examination of educational change as a process rather than

an event and his identification of the various factors that affect and influence that process render his model rich in detail. His analysis is valuable for explicating what is needed for successful educational change; Birzea and Venda, on the other hand, look at the experience of educational change contextualised in processes of societal transition. Where Fullan focuses on what makes educational change successful or not and what elements inform it, Venda and Birzea try to examine how change has happened in the way that it has in the Former Soviet Union.

b) The Oxford model of educational change

The second attempt to theorise educational change in the FSU, the Oxford model, takes the lived experience of transition as a basis from which to arrive at a conceptualisation of educational change. The model that emerges sees the transition as a movement from certainty to uncertainty, from uniformity to diversity and from control to autonomy (McLeish, 1998). Educational change is thus linked to political transition, and reflects the process of the authoritarian system being threatened, rupturing and being replaced by more democratic processes. It factors in the ensuing period of uncertainty and further political changes which then serve to clarify the direction of the educational system through legislation that finally paves the way for the implementation of change at the classroom level. The process is not a linear progression but a 'variable movement (in time) from one condition to another (McLeish and Phillips, 1998 p. 8).

The model, however, assumes a direct link between legislation and implementation. It also assumes an even, sequential pace and rate of development from the national to the local levels. It suggests that transition will culminate in the establishment of more democratic regimes with decentralised, education systems, which, as noted earlier, is not necessarily a foregone conclusion. Evidence suggests that tensions and contradictions between the macro and the micro levels are recursive (Ginsberg, 1991; Grove and Johnson, 2000) and that decentralisation and donor- driven local projects may outpace

national development (Grove and Johnson, 2000; Mebrahtu, Crossley and Johnson, 2000; Mitter, 2003).⁴⁴ Finally, as Mebrahtu et.al. attest:

..educational systems do not change simply because there is a change in the national government. Factors that spark both 'macro level' and 'micro level' transitions often consist of a complex interplay of global and local, political, economic and social forces – including the influence of the international and development assistance agencies (Mebrahtu, Crossley and Johnson 2000, p. 11)

With that one statement they go to the crux of the matter. What is missing from all of these attempts to examine the nature of educational change in the FSU is:

- Any consideration of the analytical frameworks from which these models are derived
- An analysis of the cultural aspect of the encounter between two opposing ideological systems (notions of community, faith and civil society, for instance)
- Any analysis of the role of the NGOs and INGOs in the transition process in general and in educational change in particular and hence,
- Any exploration of the inherent knowledge/power relationships that attend international intervention in transition and educational change
- Any acknowledgement that educational change in this context is not a simple 'within ideology' process but involves an ideological change as well

The complexity of educational change in the FSU arises from the fact that this is a situation in which institutional or systemic change has to be introduced within a changing context: the transition dictates as well as complicates educational change. And, as Mitter (2003) and others (Polyzoi et al 2003) have observed, the rhetoric of reform has far outpaced its implementation. Moreover, external intervention means that those introducing and those experiencing change come from two different Ideological stances and have different cultures, backgrounds and norms. The theoretical and explanatory frameworks examined so far,

⁴⁴ Mitter (2003) credits the commitment of teachers and progressive head teachers as well as the work of NGOs working at the grassroots level for this, although he acknowledges the role of legislative reform in facilitating these initiatives.

therefore, while offering valuable insights, need to be both elaborated and challenged by other perspectives to test their rigour. That debate is not yet fully engaged.

However, elements from each model have something to offer the researcher seeking to understand educational change in Tajikistan. They are reciprocally illuminating. They highlight the importance of context (Birzea, 1994; McLeish 1998; Polyzoi et al 2003), of opposing ideological perspectives (communism and capitalism) colliding and co-existing with each other (Birzea, 1994; Venda, 1991) as well as the actual 'micro' processes of educational change (Fullan 2003). In doing this, they identify the very particular characteristics of educational change in the FSU. Yet none of the frameworks above take into account the fact that educational change in the FSU is externally driven and that this has led, in some cases to the wholesale jettisoning of certain concepts such as the socialist way of life and replaced them with vaguely and not unanimously defined notions of 'nation' 'democracy' 'the free market' (Amsler, 2007 p.24). Nor do they acknowledge the implications of that for the type, and relevance, of the educational change that is advocated or that national legislation, when imposed as a result of conditionalities set by international agencies like the World Bank and the IMF, may not be willingly implemented. The insights on the tensions arising from externally imposed educational change come from the comparative education and development fields. To understand how such changes are effected it is important to look at the work of those who carry them as well as at the discourses underlying them.

What is evident from these analyses is that transition in the Former Soviet Union, involves the engagement of two different ideologies and, hence attendant structures systems and policies and that this invariably leads to a period of tension and even destabilisation. That, in turn creates uncertainty, insecurity and demoralisation and sometimes a breakdown in normal social interactions. But it also opens up the opportunity to re-shape the familiar systems, structures and practices, to engage in their transformation and to move ahead in a new or better direction. Educational change in countries in transition is not just a matter of

change agents working on their institutional and structural environments, but just as much a matter of those changing environments working on them. The complexity arises from the fact that this is a situation in which both context and agency are changing simultaneously subject to factors that are often not in the control of either but reside in some external entity: such as the international community's presence through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and other Non Government Organisations (NGOs) such as the Asian Development Bank, the Swiss Development Corporation to name a few (Silova and Stiner-Khamsi 2009).

3.3 International presences, NGOs and development

International presence in countries such as Tajikistan is felt through the economic interventions of the International Non Government Organisations (INGOs) such as the IMF and the WB. They institute structural adjustment programmes, poverty reduction strategies and the attendant 'conditionalities' that impact social sectors such as education. Other NGOs as well as faith – based organisations (FBOs)⁴⁵ are more visible through their work on education, health, civil society and the humanitarian aid they provide.

3.3.1 The rise – and compromise - of NGOs

Since the 1980s the INGOs and NGOs have grown in power and influence (Berger, 2003). Their expertise is sought both as policy-makers and as practitioners. They dominate international fora such as the Jontien Summit and the (1990) Earth Summit in Rio (2002) to name but two and they are increasingly

⁴⁵ The term 'faith' rather than 'religion' is often used to avoid the potentially negative connotations associated with religious organisations in development as well as for legal reasons which might bar them from seeking funding from certain sources (Berger 2005) and applies to those organisations 'whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a non-profit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realise collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level. (Berger 2003 p. 16).

the preferred channel for the disbursement of aid by other official agencies such as the WB, the Asian Development Bank and donors in general. The provision of aid is itself governed by the 'New Policy Agenda' (Moore 1993, cited in Hulme and Edwards 1997) which developed particularly after the end of the Cold War and is:

...driven by beliefs organised around the twin poles of neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic theory (Hulme and Edwards, 1997 p 5)

In the process, Hulme and Edwards (1997) argue, NGOs have shifted ground since their own survival depends on attracting the said aid. They question whether the NGOs necessarily continue to be the independent champions of the poor and the marginalised who constituted their original clients and in whose name they came into being themselves. The aid discourse has become further complicated since 9/11 with aid provision being more directly linked to regional political agendas. Humanitarian assistance is now leveraged for geo-political purposes (Kandiyoti, 2007) and aid has become 'securitised'. (Crossley and Tikly 2004; Rizvi, 2004). This 'new narrative of security' (Crossley and Tikly, 2004 p.152) dictates where aid is delivered, depending on how significant the recipient state is to geo-political considerations and widens the gulf between Islam and the West. The NGOs are now responsible for introducing and promoting democratic values and practices and for championing good governance as well as alleviating poverty, malnourishment or education. They are expected to nurture a responsible and dynamic civil society that can hold erring governments to account. Increasingly, the new scapegoat when development programmes fail is the absence of 'good governance' or 'civil society institutions' (Dacin, Goodstein and Scott 2002). although, as I shall argue later, (section 3.3.4 and Chapter 4 section 4.3.4) part of the problem here is not the absence of such institutions but the failure of the international community to recognise their forms in the Former Soviet Union (FSU).

Donors fund the NGOs because they are seen as both in touch with the communities and possessing the managerial features that signify accountability and transparency. They are now cast in the role of 'Public Service Contractors'

entering into agreements with donors and governments to deliver social programmes that the state cannot deliver. The terms of engagement of such contracts require a neo-liberal approach to development. NGOs provide 'value for money' as quantifiably measured by donors' indicators of success: according to the neo-liberal version of development which is cast in the language of 'objectives', 'inputs and outputs', 'measurable indicators', 'risk management' 'logical frameworks' and detailed specifications of what 'partners' are to do. As Hulme and Edwards point out, these may be desirable management practices in themselves, but are:

inconsistent with the operations of organisations that claim to be promoting qualitative change, who believe that development planning and management are a learning process rather than a blueprint and who claim to treat their 'partners' as equals (Hulme and Edwards 1997, p. 8).

NGO operations are often at cross purposes with participatory approaches (Chambers 1997) and have not developed ways of critiquing or circumventing the neo-liberal agenda. Of greater concern are two subtle shifts in the roles of the NGOs. The first is the fact that donor demands that projects must yield evidence-based results cast the beneficiaries as the target of short-term project goals rather than as a disenfranchised constituency that must be empowered to take charge of their own lives and development (Hulme and Edwards, 1997). This change of focus prioritises the project's success over improving the capabilities of the beneficiaries, in Sen's (1993; 1999) use of the term. The second is that far from filling in the gaps in state provision the NGOs are now providing services that were once the responsibility of the state.

However, NGOs are also credited with pushing the development agenda forward in a variety of ways. As Mitter (2003) observes because they work at the grassroots level, they are often able to bring innovation and empowerment to communities at the periphery when central government is either unwilling or unable to effect changes quickly enough. And some NGOs, especially the Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) are often the first on the scene of disasters or crises

working in difficult and often dangerous places⁴⁶ to serve marginalised constituencies.

3.3.2 NGOs, globalisation, development and culture

NGOs and INGOs have also been subject to the forces of globalisation,⁴⁷ which likewise follows a neo-liberal agenda that puts privatisation and profit at the centre of the discourse denoting progress or success (Stromquist and Monkman, 2000b). Whether it is schools that are under discussion or financial institutions, the discourse is one of effectiveness conceived in terms of 'market', 'clients', 'outputs', 'product' and 'efficiency'. In fact globalisation is sometimes seen as a euphemism for the perpetuation of Western hegemony Odora Hoppers (Odora Hoppers, 2000). Giddens goes further and calls it a subtle, calculated technology of subjection that:

...consolidates and cements the gains of historical direct violence of colonial conquest, the structural violence of global economic relations and the cultural or epistemic violence of discourses of concealment (Giddens p. 99-100).

Cultural violence is effected Giddens maintains, by disseminating only Western norms and values and equating those with the global or 'world' culture. They are thus so universalised and routinised that they brook no counter discourse. Their normalisation silences debate on the legitimacy of the process itself and its effects. Or, rather, it ensures that any such discourse can be dismissed as an anomaly. Giddens sees the NGOs as carriers of this hegemony through their programmes, the voices of dissent being silenced in the name of progress defined in Western terms. Moreover, he argues, it is precisely through the

⁴⁶ In my own time as programme manager in Badakhshan DIFD funded the AKF programme but barred its own personnel from visiting the project because it was considered too dangerous to do so way into 2000.

⁴¹ One definition of the phenomenon of globalisation is that it is 'a set of processes by which the world is rapidly becoming integrated into one economic space via increased international trade, the production and financial markets and the internationalisation of a commodity culture promoted by an increasingly networked global telecommunication systems.' (Gilbson-Graham 1996 p.121 cited in (Stromquist and Monkman, 2000b).

educational reforms that the NGOs/INGOs facilitate, that they are enabled to become complicit in this agenda.

In education, globalisation has also served to both uniformise certain features of education (total number of school years, divisions into primary and secondary schooling, the teaching of literacy and numeracy and science, international tests for mathematics) and commodify it (Tomask 2004 p.198). There has been a significant shift in ideology Tomask claims. Education is not seen as one of the foremost responsibilities of the state but a commodity to be bought by those who can afford it. It has moved from being a public good to being a private good. The corollary of this is that education now focuses on language, mathematics and technology. It prioritises globally marketable skills rather than engaging students in the pursuit of knowledge, expanding the mind and socialising or validating the culture, norms, values and heritage of the communities it is supposed to be serving (Reeves 2004).

In the process, Western pedagogies are introduced as self-evidently better without debate about other local epistemologies that might be explored, or interrogating those pedagogies' fundamental premises which are rooted in the economic paradigm. This puts problem-solving at the centre of the agenda rather than the shaping of character or embedding social, communal and personal value systems (Stephens, 2007).

The argument is echoed by development scholars such as Stephens (2007) and Chabbott, (2003), comparative education experts like Crossely, (2004) Crossley and Watson, (2003) and others (Heathershaw, 2007). They warn of the wholesale transfer of educational practices into other cultures the corollary of which is the denial of alternative perspectives on issues such as what is deemed 'good education' in different cultures. They also caution against the marginalisation of the crucial issue of cultural context. This it is, they claim, that results in the simplistic development of uniform reform packages for the FSU which cast aside all that the Soviets had set up on the one hand and overlook the

variety of cultural, historical backgrounds and national ideologies that underpin education on the other (Silova and Steiner-Khamisi, 2008;). They draw attention to the hegemonic discourses in which development is dominated by economic considerations and language (Martinussen, 1997) and how these, in turn, are presented as 'acultural' so that the absence of value judgements over equity, social justice is normalised and hence not interrogated (Stephens 2007). As Hyden (2008) points out, the fact that economic transaction themselves are socially derived particularly in local and often in non-Western contexts is conveniently not acknowledged (Hyden, 2008). Whether the concern centres on the impact of globalisation (Carnoy, 2000) or the politicisation of international aid (Kandiyoti, 2007; Rizvi, 2004), reflexive scholarship from the International, comparative and development fields seeks to unmask prevailing hegemonies. It calls for a prioritisation of contextual factors and culture to counter what Stephens terms 'Western ethnocentricity' (Stephens, 2007 p. 29).⁴⁸ Indeed Reeves (2004) calls for any intervention to be accompanied and informed by an ethnographic exploration of the cultural context in which it is introduced.

If the economic paradigm dominates globalisation, Stephens (2007) argues that it also dominates development discourses. While he does not reject the validity of an economic approach, Stephens takes issue with the fact those economic discourses:

...are not only perceived of as being 'value- free' and acultural but are also seen as unquestionable (Stephens 2007, p. 31).

This, he contends, normalises the absence of value judgements and of interrogation with respect to equity, social justice placing the legitimacy of an economic view of development beyond evaluation and critique. This results in, what he terms a 'Western ethnocentricity' which excludes any consideration of other cultures. Tension arises in the development project from the interaction of:

⁴⁸ It is important to clarify that the critique is not of all things Western or all things liberal but of the 'skewing' and narrowing of the liberal agenda so that it currently acknowledges only the economic perspective on development and prioritises ethnocentric perspectives to the exclusion of all others.

...the continued belief in the neutrality of means by which development is delivered (Stephens 2007, p. 40)

with cultural forces. As Hyden (2008) points out even economic activities at the micro level between buyer and seller that are framed in social relationships at the micro level between buyer and seller that are enduring, recurrent and create an interdependent exchange far different from the sets of focused, independent, activities that characterises 'market' economy. Like Stephens, he attributes the failure of development projects in part, at least, to the denial of culture and the power of culture (Stephens 2007 p.3). Ginsberg's (1991) view on the issue is equally apt: one contradiction in the space for educational reform or change is that the economic forces that govern it are global while the social struggle for cultural expression and representation is, by its very nature, local. The power differential is enormous. The struggle to break free of donor demands in order to become sustainable in the local context is captured in Chapter 8. One aspect of local cultural expression and representation that is important for this study is that of religion or faith. The next section looks at a set of institutions that channel international aid and that operate from a cultural basis, although this in itself creates its own set of tensions: the Faith Based Organisation or FBOs.

3.3.3 Faith based organisations (FBOs) in development

Given that the terms 'faith' 'religion' and 'spirituality' are often used together it is important to look at the distinction between them at the outset of this discussion. Haynes (1997) offers a useful way of looking at religion to explain its link with development. He sees it as:

First, in a spiritual sense when one is concerned with transcendence, sacredness and ultimacy. Second in a social-material sense where religion defines and unifies social, political and community based groups or movements (Haynes 1997, p. 713).

Building on this definition, Maycotte (1998 cited in De Cordier 2008) argues that religion, where it informs social change, acts as catalyst for social responsibility

and reconciliation. Both these perspectives draw attention to the two aspects of religion: faith and spirituality that are interiorised and personal, and the societal aspect of religion. Hence faith is perceived as being less contentious an issue in the current secular society: which is why the term FBOs is preferred to Religious Non-Government Organisations or RNGOs (Berger, 2003).⁴⁹ FBOs are described as those organisations:

... whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a non-profit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realise collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level (Marten, 2002 cited in Berger 2003, p. 16).

Notwithstanding the fact that FBOs often serve the same constituency, are the first ones on the scene of crisis and conflict and are involved in advocacy for the poor and have a long history of development work, they are often left out of development discourse (Clarke, 2007; De Cordier, 2008; De Cordier, 2009; Ferris, 2005; Lunn, 2009). In part the issue is a cultural one. Development discourses are characterised by modernisation and secularisation theory, which holds that religious institutions, actions and consciousness lose their significance over time as societies modernise (Clarke, 2007; Lunn, 2009). The post – enlightenment separation of church and state is held partly responsible for the ambivalence over the role of faith in the public arena (Berger, 2003; Lunn, 2009). Clarke (2007) suggests that this was evident both in ‘secular reductionism’ which prioritised other variables (gender, class for example) in defining development and in ‘materialistic determinism’ which excluded the consideration of role of the spiritual in human behaviour (Clarke 2007). Marxist theory (the infamous opiate of the people) has contributed further to the secularisation of development and the post enlightenment separation of the church and state has served to remove faith from the public to the private (personal) sphere of life (Lunn 2009; Berger 2003). The suspicion that FBOs, whether Muslim, Christian or of any other faith, have a hidden agenda of proselytisation (overt or covert) is another reason why they have been marginalised in development discourses.

⁴⁹ Berger notes that such religious development organisations feel that ‘faith’ is a term less associated with the negative connotations that can be attached to the word ‘religion’ (Berger 2003).

These issues merit a fuller discussion than the scope of this thesis allows. It is important to note, however, secularism is not as pervasive a phenomenon as might at first seem. As Haynes (2006) points out, we are witnessing, not so much a 'resurgence' of religious consciousness as a current manifestation of a cyclical phenomenon (Haynes 2006). In the development field as Berger observes:

Within the dynamic matrix of complex organisational networks that is civil society, the emergence of national and international RNGOs challenges the notion that the emerging global order will be a purely secular one (Berger 2005, p. 17).

The academic debates notwithstanding, FBOs are attracting attention in development circles for a number of reasons. Firstly, the secular – sacred separation is a Western construct not necessarily shared by or relevant to other communities. Nor do they confine faith to the personal sphere. This is true, not just of the poor seeking solace in spirituality (Marshall, 2001) but amongst socially mobile populations in rapidly modernising societies as well (Haynes, 2006), where it often reinforces both identity and social cohesion. These communities ascribe a more active role to religion in their daily lives, combining the sacred, transcendental aspect of faith with the material and the social. (De Cordier 2008). Secondly, as noted above, the neo-liberal, short-term, economic-based, and now, securitised aid agenda is considered just as suspect by beneficiaries as their reservations over FBOs' aid efforts being underpinned by proselytising agendas. Thirdly, the realisation that secular development strategies have had little impact on poverty reduction has focused the minds of development practitioners and scholars alike on looking more deeply into the reasons for the disconnect between development efforts and outcomes for poor communities. As Berger notes there is:

....growing rapprochement between religious and secular ideologies in the public sphere driven largely by a recognition of the limits of a purely secular approach to the solutions of the world's economic, environmental and social ills (Berger 2003 p. 17).

Finally, the events of 9/11 are cited as challenging the notion that faith is a private matter for individuals to decide upon and is disassociated from political and social

considerations although it has to be noted that religious rituals have always had their place even in secular societies (Haynes 2006). The celebration of Christmas and the swearing in of Presidents and of witnesses at trials for example and the presence of Christian FBOs in development also suggest that religion has not quite retreated to the private sphere. Yet the ambivalence over its place in research persists and is evident even in the basic consideration of research paradigms (Lincoln and Guba 2005).

To broaden the discussion a little, despite consensus over the fact that research paradigms themselves emanate from the basic philosophical considerations of what constitutes reality and how we may know it, a consideration of the spiritual seems to be excluded from the discussion. Yet much philosophical debate and thought stems from some engagement with, or even opposition to, the spiritual realm. In speaking of how their perspective on the place of values and 'religion' in research has evolved, Lincoln and Guba (2000) state:

If we had it to do all over again, we would make values, or, more correctly, axiology (the branch of philosophy dealing with ethics, aesthetics, and religion) a part of the basic foundational philosophical dimensions of paradigm proposal. (Guba and Lincoln 2005, p.199-200)

In their view this would not only help to recognise:

.. the embeddedness of ethics within, and not external to, the paradigms... and would contribute to the consideration of the dialogue about the role of spirituality in human inquiry (ibid).

Guba and Lincoln contend that the axiological has so far been excluded from the discussion of the basic premises from which the paradigms emanate because of the tentativeness amongst researchers to engage with the religious; to acknowledge, in fact, the link between the two. It has been easier to deal with ethical concerns as an aspect of conducting the research rather than to locate them within the deeper and broader discussion of paradigms. They argue, however, that if religion were more broadly defined to encompass spirituality then

it and the axiological would find their natural and more central place within the paradigms rather than remaining external to the basic discussion of them (ibid).

The matter is not only one of the research community recognising the need to acknowledge the place of the spiritual or religious or the axiological that forms a part of the lived experience of communities, in the conceptualisation of academic scholarship. It also raises the issue of the relationship between faith and culture and here, it is important to acknowledge that the two are interconnected in varying degrees, various forms and diverse patterns of behaviour in different communities. At the risk of generalising, it is possible to posit that in Western societies religion is subsumed under culture. In Islam, it is the reverse. Culture is subsumed under religion and cultural practices are often identified as religious to give them legitimacy. However, this too is an over-simplification when looking at Central Asia. As Khalid (2007) notes, the seventy years of communism meant that Central Asian Islam developed very differently from that in other parts of the world (see Chapter 2 sections 2.2; 2.3 and Chapter 4 sections 4.3.1; 4.3.2).

Although culture is not fore-grounded in this study it does permeate the research in a number of ways. Firstly in asking what educational change means to a community of educators in a given context assumes a focus on culture as meaning-making (Storey J, 2007).⁵⁰ Secondly, the IPD-AKF/AKDN-Badakhshani relationship as already noted, rests partly on a common link through the Aga Khan who leads both: hence the intersection of faith elements and development. Finally response to change, as I shall argue later in this thesis, is embedded in cultural practices and experiences. It is important then to explore the notion of culture as it features in this study.

⁵⁰ Although this discussion focuses on culture as meaning-making and ideational, it is essential to acknowledge the very important place of material culture in the lives of communities. I would hold that material culture is grounded on the ideational and meaning-making foundations of culture and is an expression of it, reflecting both the stability of culture and, through challenging accepted ideas and norms, its dynamism.

The concept of culture is drawn from the social definition of it which links it to meaning-making and meaning circulation within a group. In this sense culture is concerned with two things:

1. The knowledge and ideas that gives meaning to the beliefs and actions of individuals and societies;
2. The ideational tool which can be used to describe and evaluate that action.' (Stephens 2007 p.29)

However, meanings are not always simply agreed on and circulated. As Storey (2007) explains:

Cultures are always both shared and contested networks of meanings. Culture is where we share and contest meanings of ourselves, of each other and of the social worlds in which we live (Storey 2007, p. 5).

His statement acknowledges the dynamism of culture and agency, its space within it. Stephens (2007) describes culture as 'ideational' and extends that to include problem-solving. Culture, he holds, is the way in which human beings solve the problems that the environment, human and physical, sets them. In that sense then culture carries with it the ideas of change, empowerment and decision-making.

Culture...comprises two dimensions: firstly, ideas, beliefs and knowledge that are meaningful to individuals and societies, and secondly, the description and evaluation of those beliefs and activities. Culture, then, is both content and evaluation. Culture is both "what is" and also "what is acted upon" it possesses both passive and active characteristics which in turn create the tensions between tradition and change, the individual and community, the indigenous and the exogenous (Stephens 2007, p 226).

Culture then, is both a given set of rules, behaviours, ideas that are accepted as a norm or tradition as well as dynamic, reflexive, challenging and evolving network of meanings. This has interesting implications for examining institutions and change as the next section demonstrates.

3.3.4 Institutional development

The term 'institutional change' is sometimes used interchangeably with organisational change; it is therefore framed in the language of 'increased efficiency' or 'higher productivity' more readily associated with the changes in business organisations such as the firm. In this economic discourse, 'stakeholder expectations' are seen as needing 'management', implying that these are barriers to the achievement of institutional goals or objectives. Institutions are perceived as organisations that are either political (state institutions) usually at the macro level, or as 'systems of production or operation' such as the firm (Dacin, Goodstein and Scott 2002). They are located within the economic and 'managerial' discourse outlined above. They are rarely recognised as social structures or cultural sites, although an 'institutional culture' which is a very different entity, is acknowledged.

In development terms, institutions are generally located in two arenas: the government and civil society. In the political arena they comprise bodies such as ministries, legislature, executive agencies and corporations generating discussions over issues of governance, efficiency and transparency. As civil society institutions, they comprise local NGOs, usually set up by external NGOs in the FSU, that focus on advocacy for certain groups and on change. In that sense they are not indigenous but 'imported' institutions: the local equivalents remain unacknowledged by the international development agencies.

Both perspectives are narrow in their conceptualisations cast as these are in Western notions of societal organisation. Institutions are not just visible, formal entities but also:

...rules that are upheld by society over a long enough period of time to make a difference to individual action. (North 1990). Institutions are ubiquitous but not universal. They are created from the store of cultural values and norms that a given society treasures. While no society, especially today, is immune to outside influences, any borrowed values and norms that are reflected in particular institutions become meaningful and

legitimate only once they have been domesticated and acted upon by key groups.' (Hyden 2008, p.2)

Defined thus, the term encompasses informal institutions, networks and relationships, which are both invisible and powerful, operating alongside formal institutions to strengthen, undermine or complement them as dictated by the strength or weakness of the formal institutions. It draws attention to the importance of the endorsement of any change by 'key groups' of actors, as well as the importance of both history and the internalisation of rules or changed rules. Concurring with Stephens (2007), Hyden (2008) also rejects the casting of development in a purely economic paradigm. He points out, furthermore, that at the local level economic transactions are themselves framed in social relationships

Framing institutions beyond the economic paradigm as social structures and cultural sites throws into sharper relief the 'Western ethnocentricity' of newly set up local civil society NGOs in the FSU, and reinforces the need to explore indigenous channels of advocacy and change such as the mahallahs in Central Asia. Institutions, whether formal or informal, matter when there are costs to violating them. Informal institutions constitute and carry norms that are considered important enough to be legitimately treated as alternatives to the formal ones and are:

...created, communicated and reproduced outside the public realm (Hyden 2008, p.3).

Hyden (2008) speaks from his experience in Africa, but his insights have salience for Central Asia as well: the imposition of external institutions and of social differentiation based on participation in a capitalist economy, are common to both. Public space, in Africa at least, Hyden attests, is affective rather than civic, and trying to do development through externally imposed policies has its limitations. The question to ask, he argues, is:

How do we avoid a Eurocentric perspective that blocks the ability to find institutional forms that are developmental? (Hyden 2008, p.2).

While this thesis does not set out to provide an answer to that question, it does seek to understand how change is effected through the transformation of existing, indigenous or historically developed institutions such as the IPD. And it does this through conceptualising educational change within the FSU transition, faith – inspired development and institutional change.

3.4 Discourse, power and hegemony

It is clear from the discussions above that notions of discourse, power and hegemony are important in this study. The collapse of the Soviet Union as noted earlier in Chapter 2, gave legitimacy to neo-liberal agendas disseminated as noted in section 2.4, through both the direct intervention of the NGOs and INGOs and the impact of globalisation. The findings in the study revealed further issues of power, more specifically knowledge-power, resistance and appropriation.

In seeking to analyse these phenomena, I was guided, among others, by the work of Foucault (1972; 1980) on the one hand and Gramsci (1971) on the other. As with Birzea (1994) and Venda, (1991; 1999) the two theorists hail from different positions, namely post – structuralism and neo – Marxism, but their analysis of the issues of power, resistance and change complement rather than contradict each other. It has to be said at the outset that both theorists' contributions to the field of education is far greater than is reflected in my study: I explicate only those concepts that had the most relevance to my study. I wanted to draw attention to them here as an aspect of the theoretical understandings that have underpinned this study.

3.4.1 Foucault's notions of power and discourse

Power, in Foucault's (1972; 1980) terms is not a repressive force: he sees it as productive, circulatory and hence available to all in the micro-dynamics of daily

life. In that sense it is not so much who exercises the power but what is done with it that can be either constraining or liberating. He maintains that it is necessary to focus on power in its relational nature rather than its constitutive quality. But he also talks about normalisations through which power is maintained although he does not address the issue of dominant discourses. However, as Ball (2003) points out, subjugated knowledges⁵¹ are not completely drowned out by dominant discourses. The situation with Islam in Tajikistan is a case in point. In looking at change, Foucault points to individuals as exercising agency for change or non-participation in the exercise of the power dynamics, although he does not say how this is to be done.

Foucault sees power and knowledge as interlinked through discourse which he extends to incorporate not just language but what he terms 'discursive practices', social practices which produce and constitute that which they speak of (Foucault 1972). These practises serve to normalise the power dynamics in a relational and institutional settings (such as educational establishments), deriving much of their strength from their invisibility (for instance, school examinations). The greater the invisibility, the greater the power of the discourse to dominate. Stephen's analysis of development as being framed in so-called 'neutral' economic considerations illustrates the point.

In the process, discursive practices create a 'regime of truth' that at once legitimises the right of some groups over others to name the world and, as Ball points out, that determines who can say what and with what authority, as well as what is left unsaid (Fairclough 1992). The 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1980 p.131) thus generated, advocate and sanction what can be articulated, what cannot and so is silenced, and what is thus normalised through sustained currency. Through dictating what is spoken and who may speak it, discourses validate and nullify what is known and how it is known. In short discourses elucidate the relational aspect of power, generated by who knows what and who

⁵¹ Ball goes on to look at whose knowledge counts and posits that literacy needs to be redefined as political and moral and as a 'technology of the soul'. (2003; 2006)

has both the authority to speak as well as whose knowledge is legitimate.

Foucault maintains that:

..relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated, nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse' (Foucault 1980, p.93).

And he appears to see the capacity for self-reflection as the site for the power to act for change and to resist, through local intervention and individual freedom, being co-opted into or subjected to dominant power structures.

Like Foucault, Gramsci (1971) also sees all relations, not just economic ones, as relations of power. But while Foucault focuses on the individual (but not the individualistic) as an agent of change, Gramsci focuses on the collective: he examines the structural sources of power, (political parties, the state, the church). Where Foucault looks at individuals reflecting on themselves as a starting point for social change, Gramsci examines a collective consciousness of domination as the space for the change. Like Foucault, Gramsci also emphasises the importance of discursive frameworks in the construction of reality. But he sees the domination of one group over another through a process whereby consent is granted to the dominant group because of the prestige accorded it which enables it to articulate the needs of others, again, such that its position is seen as common sense. Consent, then, is critical to the maintenance of the dominant group and is central to Gramsci's articulation of hegemony.

3.4.2 Gramsci's notion of hegemony

Gramsci (1971) defines hegemony as that force in society whereby knowledge and power discourses are normalised in such a way as to entice and elicit consent to their currency from those (subaltern) to acquiesce to the unequal relations created by the hegemonic groups to the latter's dominance. In essence, however, each strata or group, however defined (urban, rural, farmers, businessperson, 'state' or civil society) have their own consciousness, (born of

their material situation and their experiences) which mitigates against the hegemonic discourse but is contained in a paradoxical relationship with it. The dominated groups organically generate their own 'intellectuals' who, through accessing and mastering the hegemonic discourses, can subvert it even as they join it, bending its usage to their own ends. The tension between the hegemonic discourse and the material experience of a situation causes friction, which is, for the most part tolerated, until the organic intellectual consciousness is expanded either through a material crisis, exposure to an alternative or heightened perspective of the state that is manifest in the problematic- but- hitherto- tolerated friction. Hence he maintains that hegemonies carry the seeds of challenges, even failed challenges to themselves, within them. Where Gramsci differs from Marx is that he does not see a dialectic relationship between the oppressed and the dominant sections of society: he sees a far more subtle relationship between the two and does not believe that the way to overturn hegemony, i.e. to produce a counter hegemonic discourse requires a revolution: change, certainly, revolution not necessarily.

3.4.3 Foucault and Gramsci in this thesis

If the exigencies of post-Soviet transition, faith considerations and development discourses have framed the educational changes that I wish to investigate, then the work of Foucault (1972; 1980) and Gramsci (1971) among others helped to make sense of what transpired in the two main institutions, the AKF and the IPD came together to effect educational change through the IPD itself. The background to that encounter and the actors in it is the subject of Chapter 4. This chapter ends with a consideration of the conceptual framework of this study.

3.5 The conceptual framework

The complexity of educational change in the Former Soviet Union required making decisions on how to frame it. While the literature on such change

provided some useful leads it did not adequately address what I wished to investigate: the encounter between two institutions linked by a common leadership which was faith-derived and operating in the post – Soviet context with all the macro issues of transition impacting on their work on educational change, through institutional transformation. My framework, then, needed to factor in several seemingly disparate elements. Firstly, I needed to take into account to the larger macro context within which economic realities had altered, which involved an ideological shift in how education was viewed and in which the international community (donors) could also dictate how development was effected. The FSU transition provided the right framework to capture this changing scenario, ensuring that contextual realities did not simply provide a background to the study but factored in it more centrally. Secondly I needed to consider the institutional transformation that was being undertaken. At one level this meant change involving operational systems and institutional organisation and management: committee structures, charters and mandates, hiring practices, departmental organisation to name a few. At a more fundamental level, however, this was an encounter between educators from different cultures, different (and changing) ideologies but with a faith derived connection to the intervening institution. It is for this reason that the discussion above has drawn from scholarship within the Former Soviet Union in the first instance together with more familiar theorists. It is also why it has ranged from educational change models to a consideration of informal institutions and issues of resistance: to capture as Reeves puts it, ‘the inherently contested, negotiated nature of institutional change’ (Reeves 2004, p. 367).

The framework I created seeks to capture this complexity in terms of macro and micro considerations, and institutional and communal factors. It links people and processes. I have therefore conceptualised educational change in Badakhshan as being framed in the broader post-Soviet transition including the role of international aid agencies in development efforts. I have also framed it in the particular relationship between the AKDN and the Badakhshani community and honed in, specifically, on the work of the AKF with the IPD believing that the transformation of the IPD will make visible the processes of educational change. Figure 2 below sets out the relationships as I see them between the actors: AKF

and IPD, the Badakhshani community and AKDN at large as well as the felt actions of the post-Soviet transition actors.



Figure 3: An illustration of the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework above serves to hold the sometimes tangled threads of the rich tapestry that the encounter between the AKF and the IPD creates as well as helping to make sense of experience for both sets of actors and myself as researcher. That encounter is framed in educational change through institutional development, faith and cultural (including institutional) change. All of which is located in the larger FSU transition. My framework responds to calls that state – centred narratives of transition in Central Asia be supplemented with sensitive ethnographic work that captures the:

...volatile interactions between macro-level institutions and policies and their reception at the micro-level, where families, workplaces and communities often respond in unintended ways that have a decisive impact on further developments' (Kandyoti, 2002, p. 254 cited in Reeves 2004, p.368).

3.6 Conclusion

As noted earlier, my study will not look at directly applying any particular model to test its efficacy. Nevertheless, it will draw on the theoretical bases discussed above including the fledging theories of the FSU transition in which educational change is framed, and notions of culture and institutions, particularly informal institutions that obtain at the change 'site' or face. In focusing on institutional change and the change agents within it, the conceptual framework depicted in the diagram above helps to create a bridge between the macro framework of national policies, structures and systems that have been the subject of the theoretical works reviewed so far and the more human world of those educators who are both the agents and the subjects of change. That world, including the place of faith within it, is captured in Chapter 4. As the findings chapters attest, in their professional and personal lives, these educators are in various stages of transition themselves.

I have drawn on various theorists in arriving at my framework. Each focuses on a particular aspect of the elements comprising this study. Here I take from Ball his observation that:

'Epistemologies and ontologies may clash and grate but the resultant friction can be purposeful and effective (see Ball 1994) in providing different lenses through which to see and think about the social world.' (Ball, 2006 p. 2).

My framework, in bringing a range of theoretical considerations together, even though there is no exact 'fit' to any, uses that purposeful friction to capture and examine that complex social and ideological landscape within which the AKF and IPD set about to effect educational change. It uses established educational change studies, newer constructs related to FSU transition as well as new forms of educational change driven by the international community and nuanced notions of culture, institutions and responses. Taking up the theme of culture and institutions, the next chapter looks more closely at the more human world of the two actors: the AKDN and the Badakhshani community who come together in this case study of educational change and development.

Chapter 4: The antecedents of change: events, actors and institutions

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the two main 'actors' the Badakhshani community and the AKDN. It provides a brief overview of the Badakhshanis' religious beliefs and of life under the Soviets. I explore aspects of the community's 'life-world'⁵² based on its external realities (the communist ideology) and internal beliefs, (its Ismaili perspective on Islam centred on the Imam).⁵³ I discuss how it negotiates between these two sometimes overlapping, sometimes opposing phenomena. I then look at the civil war and the events that led to the AKDN's presence in the region. I explore the connection between the Badakhshani community and the AKDN and the chapter concludes with a brief description of the IPD.

4.2 The Ismaili Muslims

The present Ismaili community, of which the Badakhshanis are a part, numbers approximately 15 million worldwide, living in about 25 countries including Afghanistan, China, East Africa, Europe, India, Canada, the USA, Pakistan, Syria, Tajikistan the United Kingdom and other European countries. (www.theismaili.org; Daftary, 1998, 1990; 1998). Those in the West, are recent immigrants mainly from East Africa (generally referred to as Khoja Ismailis), and the Indian sub-continent.

⁵² The term 'life-world' (Habermas) is used here to denote the all-encompassing nature of the Muslim concept of life in which there is no dichotomy between 'din' (faith) and 'duniya' (the world).

⁵³ 'Imam' means spiritual leader of the community. However, given the absence of a separation between the 'sacred' and the 'secular' as understood in most Western conceptions of religious beliefs and practices, the Imam also leads the community in their material (as well as their spiritual) lives.

Ismailis acknowledge His Highness the Aga Khan IV, who traces his lineage to the Prophet Muhammad through the Prophet's daughter Fatimah and his son-in-law Imam Ali, as their current Imam or spiritual guide. The belief in the concept of 'Imamat' or spiritual guide who leads the community of the faithful, is common to all Shia Muslims.⁵⁴ Going further, Ismailis believe in the idea of 'Imam e Zaman' (the Imam of the Time) emphasising the role of the Imam as one who interprets the practice of the faith for the community, according to their particular circumstances and time, within the tenets laid down in the Quran. (Esmail and Nanji 1977). Hence the Imam is looked to, for guidance in material as well as spiritual matters. As the Aga Khan himself explains:

Seen against the background of Christian religious tradition it might seem incongruous that a Muslim religious leader should be so involved in material and mundane matters of this world. It is not an Islamic belief, however, that spiritual life should be totally isolated from our more material everyday activities. The nature of the religious office which I hold neither requires nor is expected by the members of my Community, to be an institution whose existence is restricted to spiritual leadership. On the contrary, history and the correct interpretation of the Imamat require that the Imam, while caring first of all for the spiritual well-being of his people should also be continuously concerned with their safety and their material progress. (Aga Khan IV. The Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce speech 1976:14th Jan)

Another characteristic of Ismailism, one that is also found in varying degrees amongst Sunni and Shi'a Muslims alike, is its emphasis on the esoteric (batini) interpretation of Islam.⁵⁵ Finally, the Ismaili 'tariqa' or path in Islam emphasises the role of the intellect, leading to a stress on personal search in the practice of

⁵⁴ All Muslims acknowledge the Prophet Muhammad as the bearer of the final Divine message to humankind and the Quran as the holy book that contains that message. Beyond that commonality, Sunni Muslims hold that the Quran and the Prophet's own life and example and sayings, the Sunnah, are sufficient as sources of guidance to the community of believers for all times. The Shias, on the other hand, hold that the Prophet designated his son-in-law and cousin, Ali, as spiritual guide or Imam to the community and that this authority has since passed down the generations from one Imam (spiritual leader) to another. Contestations over which brother or son was designated Imam, account for the various communities of Shia Muslims, of which the Ismailis are one.

⁵⁵ Islam from its inception was open to a wide spectrum of perspectives on the relationship of the believer to his Creator, ranging from strict adherence to the Sharia (law) in its literal sense and an exoteric (zahiri) approach to the practice of the faith to a focus on the spirit of the Sharia and hence a more esoteric (batini) approach to faith. The latter is more commonly found amongst the Sufi (or mystical) tradition in Islam and the Ismailis.

the faith as well as its communal expression, and a strong focus on education (Nanji 1987).

Taken together, the above factors have enabled the various Ismaili communities, under the guidance of the Imam, to adapt the practice of their faith to their particular social and political circumstances, prioritise education, and face change, even particularly difficult change, with a degree of confidence. The Aga Khan's concern with safety and with the material progress of his communities wherever they live has translated into an international network of development, social and entrepreneurial agencies, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) that can respond to diasporic needs as they arise.

The Imamate of the last two Imams has been characterised by a focus on social development based on organised self-reliance within a community framework as well as modernisation within an Islamic ethical framework. Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III, the current Imam's predecessor (1877-1957), encouraged the adoption of Western dress for women, promoted their education and fostered the learning of English alongside the vernacular languages. He used the funds gifted to him by his wealthier followers during his golden and diamond jubilees (1937 and 1947) to set up a series of social development projects, including schools, hospitals and agencies for small business enterprises amongst other social and welfare provisions for the communities. The education and health services were open to all communities. These institutions formed the nucleus of the current, greatly expanded AKDN, developed under the present Imam: the AKF, set up in 1967, was the first of the agencies that comprise the AKDN.

Community structures (as opposed to the AKDN ones) set up by the Aga Khan are staffed on a voluntary basis in each country where the community resides.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ These communal structures are only gradually being introduced to the communities of Tajikistan and Afghanistan as their societies begin to stabilise.

Through them, the ethic of Islam and its emphasis on sharing, caring for the weaker members of society and voluntarism in the giving of time or resources, finds practical expression through institutions that stress effectiveness, efficiency, good management and professionalism or meritocracy. (Keshavjee 1998). The Aga Khan's guidance to the community prioritises the pursuit of knowledge, the need to keep a balance between the material and the spiritual at all times, the importance of giving back to the community in terms of knowledge, time or financial help to better the lives of the less fortunate. He emphasises the values of integrity, meritocracy, compassion, excellence, tolerance and hard work. The centrality of the Imam's presence in the life-world of the community on a temporal as well as spiritual level is evident in the breadth and depth of the guidance given to them through his speeches, his addresses to the communities when he meets them and his messages to them through the community leaders.

The Imam is recognised as the seat of authority through the traditional concept of Imamah, and, by virtue of that authority, an initiator of change, occasionally even uncomfortable change, as the times and circumstances dictate. This dual role is well described by him in his tribute to the Prophet at the Seerat conference (1976):

The Holy Prophet's life gives us every fundamental guideline that we require to resolve the problem as successfully as our human minds and intellects can visualize. His example of integrity, loyalty, honesty, generosity both of means and of time, his solicitude for the poor, the weak and the sick, his steadfastness in friendship, his humility in success, his magnanimity in victory, his simplicity, his wisdom in conceiving new solutions for problems which could not be solved by traditional methods, without affecting the fundamental concepts of Islam,⁵⁷ surely all these are foundations which, correctly understood and sincerely interpreted, must enable us to conceive what should be a truly modern and dynamic Islamic society in the years ahead (The Aga Khan IV Seerat conference (1976 12th March) emphasis added).

⁵⁷ This approach to Islam here attributed to the Prophet Muhammad and advocated by the Aga Khan is also consonant with how the Jadidists approached the problems of their times and the solutions they offered to overcome them.

The Ismaili communities look to the Imam to guide them especially in times of crises. However, until the collapse of the Soviet Union the Badakhshani Ismailis' political situation precluded direct and sustained contact with the Imam. They had had no access to, and arguably no knowledge of, the AKDN.

4.3 The Tajik Badakhshani Ismailis

The Badakhshanis, who also refer to themselves as Pamiris, are said to have migrated to the Pamir Mountains from the sedentary areas of Transoxiana in the 11th century, seeking refuge from religious persecution by Sunni Muslims hostile to their interpretation of Islam (Iloliev 2008).⁵⁸ However, the mountains offered only partial sanctuary and harassment continued as late as the 19th century (Iloliev, 2008).⁵⁹ The persecution ended for the Tajik Ismailis when the territory was divided between the Russians and the English into what is known as Afghan and Tajik Badakhshan, separated by the river Panj. But, as described in Chapter 2, section 2.3, Russian and Soviet rule brought its own confrontations and disruptions of cultural patterns of life (Khalid 2007).

Like other Muslims in the region, the Ismailis kept their religious beliefs and identities intact (though concealed) throughout the Soviet era. Recognising that they could not afford to completely alienate these populations, especially during World War 2, the Soviets allowed 'official' mosques to operate under their control (Gleason, 1997a; Khalid, 2007). However, it was the unofficial, parallel, communal religious structures that not only continued to exist but also to oversee the religious aspects of life (Atkin, 1992).⁶⁰ The Badakhshanis practised their

⁵⁸ The Ismailis had fared well during the Samanid dynasties (972-999) in Transoxiana but were then dislodged when the Turks took over Central Asia since they were considered heretics.

⁵⁹ Even during the fieldwork the prospect of bridging the Panj river to link Afghan and Tajik Badakhshan had some Tajik Badakhshanis worried, the recent history still fresh in their minds (YAMDIL)

⁶⁰ Atkin (1992) argues that this was not, 'parallel Islam' as it was dubbed by some writers in the 1980s and 1990s nor is it an innovation signifying political opposition to the Soviets but, instead, a continued historic tradition of Islam amongst the population (Atkin, 1992).

faith in homes and families and visited local shrines, saints' tombs, springs, groves, rock formations and other natural settings, (astanas), which pre-dated the Soviet era. Stories and devotional poetry were used to pass on religious knowledge, and the Farmans (guidance from the Imam) were read and treasured as was the Quran. 'Khalifas', who were local religious leaders and custodians of the religious structures maintained religious practices and officiated at 'rites of passage' events such as funerals. (Niyozov 2001; Keshavjee 1998; Iloliev 2008). They chose their successors from amongst their sons who were watched by them and the community for their moral and intellectual ability to hold the office (personal communication 2006). As the Aga Khan III, who was Imam at that time, explains:

In Central Asia the leadership of the Ismailis is by inheritance in the hands of certain families and has been handed down in continuous line through centuries. This is true of my followers in Afghanistan and in Russia and in Chinese Turkestan, where certain families have been since their conversion to Islam administrators and representatives of the Imam (Aga Khan III 1954 p. 24).

The connection with the Imam was never entirely severed during that time, (1926- 1992). There are indications that to some extent the community's intellectual and political direction was determined by the Imam and specific links to him. Badakhshani oral history speaks of emissaries of the Imam visiting the Badakhshanis as the Soviets were taking over, with guidance on how they should respond.⁶¹

4.3.1 Life under the Soviets

The Tajik Ismailis fared comparatively well under Soviet rule. They were

⁶¹ Badakhshanis tell of the visit of Pir Sabzali in 1924, bringing guidance from the then Imam, Sir Sultan Mohammad Shah, urging the community to accept communist rule because the communists would feed, clothe and educate them. The Imam is also reported to have said that a day would come when the Soviet empire would melt like snow in the sun (Niyozov 2001). A Khalifa also told me how one night he swam across the river that formed the border with Afghanistan and brought back the Farmans (guidance to the community) of the Aga Khan 111.

protected from persecution by the Sunnis, there was tacit tolerance of their religious practices,⁶² and their standards of living, education and health improved. The infrastructure of roads, communication systems, electricity and earthquake-resistant, low-rise apartments that came with Sovietisation contrasts sharply with the trodden paths, the occasional donkey and cart, and the absence of electric lights on the Afghan side of the river. As noted in Chapter 2, section 2.3, the most impressive developments under the Soviets were in the social sector. Every remote valley had a school and a medical point, and each district, a hospital. Health resorts were built around the natural springs with their healing properties, and diseases such as malaria had been eradicated. Literacy rates rose to 95%.

4.3.2 Some convergences

The Soviets also built on those communal values that fitted in well with the communist ideology and re-aligned them to their own purposes. Communal solidarity, care for the weaker sections of society and the sense of communal responsibility which underpinned Soviet ideology, drew on the already – existing, strong community ethos and networks based on Muslim values and on cultural ties that also emphasised a sense of communal responsibility, generosity, and the care of the vulnerable and the elderly. Even religious figures such as Nasir I Khusraw, Rudaki and Rumi were co-opted as ‘national’ heroes, with a focus the values they promoted while their religious teachings were ignored (Iloliev 2008). To some extent the Soviets were successful. The Badakhshanis learnt to live with ontologically opposed ideologies which nevertheless had partial axiological connections. The importance of education helps to illustrate the point.

⁶² In fact, although they effectively closed the madrassas the Soviets did set up ‘official’ Islamic structures under their own control. The issue was one of ensuring that the population did not have its own centres of power or access to wider Islamic movements that might fuel nationalistic ambitions. And the Soviets also knew that they could not afford to totally alienate the population. They sought, instead, to educate them out of their ‘backward’ notions and cultural practices (Khalid 2007).

4.3.2.1 The importance of education

As noted in Chapter 2 section 2.2, the Soviets saw education as a vehicle for inculcating communist ideology, producing qualified personnel for the party and administrative machine and the centrally planned economy, and 'modernising' the 'backward peoples'. These aims were not in contradiction with the aims of reformist Muslim movements like Jadidism, which also wanted to universalise education and emancipate women. The difference was in the ontological position in which the aims were embedded (Khalid, 2007).

For Badakhshanis, geography as well as the tenets of the faith put a premium on education. The inhospitable environment left little scope for economic activities. Some farming was possible in the valleys further down the Pamir mountains, and the Soviets had built some very light industry – a shoe and a sewing factory - in the region. Everything else that was needed, food, clothing, medicine, was flown in from the capital, Dushanbe. Most Badakhshanis therefore relied on a good education⁶³ to get themselves jobs as doctors, teachers, pilots, professors, KGB officers and other administrative positions within the Politbureau. The Ismaili interpretation of Islam has always stressed the role of the intellect. In their Farmans (guidance) to the communities, the last two Imams have continuously emphasised its importance, especially women's education, pointing out that it is they who are the transmitters of knowledge to their families and particularly children. Communist agendas and Ismaili aspirations coincided in these and other respects, but the Badakhshanis did not substitute one ontological position for another: they did not give up their faith.

⁶³ During my time there, the regional government continued to allocate the largest share of the budget to education even during the most difficult of times.

4.3.3 Soviet education in perspective

That Soviet education discouraged critical thinking, initiative and creative thinking, is emphasised in post –Soviet analyses of the education system (Heynamen and De Young 2004; Niyozov 2001; Shagdar 2006).⁶⁴ However, the technical goals of education were well served with respect to literacy, numeracy, and universality, and almost all the Former Soviet Union countries could have boasted of reaching, even outstripping, the Millennium Development Goals.

As I argue in Chapter 6.3, the dexterity with which the young were able to re-orient their lives in response to their rapidly changing situation calls into question the stereotypical view of Soviet education as an exercise in learning and reproducing factual knowledge and relegating creative thinking, questioning and problem-solving as unimportant.⁶⁵ When the AKDN went into the region it was possible to engage with a well-educated population who put their minds to the massive challenges posed by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Young graduates from the Soviet system proved to be both adaptable and quick to re-orient themselves to take up opportunities and the responsibilities that were thrust upon them.⁶⁶ However, it is moot point whether it was Soviet education itself that encouraged critical and lateral thinking or whether survival in a socialist state demanded an entrepreneurial approach to life where shortages of essentials and certainly of luxuries were frequent and favours needed to be exchanged for favours (Khalid, 2007).

⁶⁴ For an account of the gains and losses in terms of human capital in the post – Soviet era in the central Asian countries see Shagdar (2006).

⁶⁵ It is a testament to Soviet education as much as to AKDN's development approach that it was able to localise its complex development initiatives in Badakhshan within a matter of ten years

⁶⁶ This does not negate the despair that the community experienced during the civil war, also documented in Chapter 6. It is to say that when opportunities did present themselves in the form of employment with the AKDN or in small business enterprises, the human capital harnessed during the Soviet times, came to the fore. But also see Shagdar (2006) for a review of the human capital in the Central Asian countries in the post-Soviet era.

4.3.4 Parallel structures

Party networks crisscrossed all areas of life. Party values were inculcated in school from an early age and aspiring 'young hopefuls' were identified through the 'October' and 'young pioneer' programme run by schools and subsequently promoted to the Komsomal or 'Young communist party'. Agriculture was organised under the Kholkhoz (collective farming) and the Sofkhoz (state-run collective farms) structures, whereby farmers and other workers collectively worked on the land, planting and harvesting.

These structures did not, however, supersede traditional ones. The notion of collective organisation and action within the community continued to reside in the 'mahalla', which comprised a neighbourhood or an entire village. The 'Raisi mahalla' (head of the mahalla) was a well-respected, usually elderly figure who, together with other elders, oversaw communal celebrations, settled disputes (he knew every person within his jurisdiction well) and mobilised the community to help with local building and cleaning. The mahalla system has always continued to exist alongside official structures, Soviet or post-Soviet (Heathershaw 2007) just as what Khalid (2007) calls 'customary Islam' always existed alongside both normative Islam and the official mosques set up by the Soviets.

It is this resilience of community structures, as I shall argue in Chapter 7, that inform some of the IPD's operating practices despite official discourses that contradict them. They are, what Hyden calls informal institutions (see Chapter 3 section 3.3.4), which, as I shall demonstrate later, do not simply exist alongside official discourses and circumvent them, but also draw from the new structures what is important for their own development (see Chapter 9).

Although state policy promoted egalitarianism and equality, in reality privilege and elitism also existed in Soviet times, related to job status (teachers were held in

high estimation, and enjoyed free heating and electricity for instance)⁶⁷ and party position. Nevertheless, in general most people had a good standard of living, with predictable, secure futures to look forward to: until the collapse of the Soviet Union. For Tajikistan, that crisis, as noted earlier, was further exacerbated by the civil war.

4.4 The Tajik civil war (1992/3 -7)

Unrest in Tajikistan began in 1990 before the declaration of independence. Rumours that Armenian refugees from Nagorno Karabakh were to receive housing in Dushanbe when local people were homeless,⁶⁸ perpetuated by the Tajik elite who were seeking to stage a palace coup in the wake of events in Moscow in August 1991 (Mitter 2003), resulted in demonstrations in Dushanbe. The Tajik government blamed the disturbances on Islamic fundamentalists, a recently – formed cultural organisation called ‘Rastokhez’ and the party elite (Brown, 1998). Their heavy-handed response politicised the conflict which then coalesced along ideological lines. Independence was declared by Tajikistan in September 1991 under a moderate, representative leadership. Shuffles of power followed. The old-guard communists, largely the affluent and long-privileged Northerners, the Khojandis, re-instated their supremacy. Political opposition now emerged in the form of the hitherto-banned Islamic Republic Party (IRP), ‘Rastokhez’ and the Democratic Party, whose support lay in the centre and in the east, including Badakhshan. The pro-communist government mobilised the Kulyobis from the South and subsequently armed them. The Badakhshanis lost what little representation they had when the interior minister, one of the few Badakhshanis in government, was sacked. They now sought greater autonomy from Dushanbe, through the Lal I Badakhshan party. By late 1992 the conflict had also progressed along these regional and, increasingly, ethnic lines, with certain armed militias emerging from Kulyob ostensibly siding

⁶⁷ Although Chapter 2 section 2.3.2 describes teachers’ status as low, in Badakhshan they were regarded well and commanded much respect as leaders of the community (Niyozov 2001).

⁶⁸ The Tajiks were not antagonistic to the Armenians but a long waiting list for housing the victims of an earthquake in Hissar, close to Dushanbe, touched a nerve (Brown, 1998).

with the government but essentially settling old scores and motivated by self interest. The fighting was brutal. Summary executions, torture and ethnically incited killings increasingly embittered and polarised Tajik society. (Anderson, 1997)

Russia and Uzbekistan finally intervened in October 1992 as 'peace keepers' but also got involved in the conflict. They used the 'Islamic fundamentalist' argument to side with the government (which was increasingly dominated by the Kulyobis rather than the Khojandis) and to either ignore or engage in atrocities as well. The worst of the fighting was over by early 1993. However, attempts at peace and representative government were thwarted for a number of reasons. Firstly, the increasing intransigence of the Kulyobi-dominated government made it difficult to reach a power-sharing compromise. Secondly, rogue elements exploited the situation to settle long –standing scores based on underlying ethnic tensions created during population movements in the Soviet era. Thirdly, insurgencies from the opposition factions from neighbouring Afghanistan, as well as continued Russian and Uzbek intervention served to prolong the conflict. (Poujol, 1998). At last, five rounds of talks (from April 1994 to December 1995) and increasing pressure from the Russians and the Uzbeks to settle the conflict resulted in a peace treaty signed in 1997. However, hostilities continued till well into 2001 (Heathershaw 2007).⁶⁹ and the peace remains fragile,⁷⁰ its terms effectively circumscribed by the increasing marginalisation of parliamentary processes as the President consolidates power in his and his supporters' hands, rendering representation in parliament, which was a condition of the peace, irrelevant.⁷¹

⁶⁹ During my own time in Badakhshan (1998-2002) DIFD while funding programmes did not permit its staff to visit the area and the AKDN continued to monitor the situation regarding travel from Khorog to Dushanbe. It often restricted our journeys or insisted that cars travelled in close proximity to each other for safety.

⁷⁰ For a more detailed explanation of the causes of the civil war, see Anderson 1997, p.172-178

⁷¹ For a fuller discussion of the post – conflict developments in Tajikistan see 'peace building as practice: discourses from Tajikistan' Heathershaw (International Peacekeeping Vol. 2 June 2007).

The Badakhshanis had no representation and hence no place at the bargaining table during the peace negotiations. Opposition forays from the neighbouring Garm (now renamed Rasht) district and Afghanistan led to a blockade of the Khorog-Dushanbe road, further jeopardising their already-fragile food security provision. The situation was exacerbated by the almost 100,000 internally displaced people seeking refuge from the fighting in Dushanbe in Badakhshan and increasing the population by 50%. By June 1993, the region had to renounce notions of independence and seek reconciliation with the government; by August 1993 the population in some parts of Badakhshan was said to be close to starvation (Brown, 1998). The Ismaili leaders appealed to the Aga Khan for guidance and help. This resulted in discreet missions 1991-2), aid (1992-3) and a more overt presence of the AKDN in their midst by 1994.

4.5 The Aga Khan Development Network

The AKDN describes itself as:

...a contemporary endeavour of the Ismaili Imamat to realise the social conscience of Islam through institutional action (www.akdn.org).

It is a 'faith –inspired' ⁷² development institution, comprising a number of agencies engaged in health, education and rural development, microfinance, tourism, culture, economic development and other aspects of communal life but excluding the political (see figure 2 below). It has recently added post-conflict reconstruction to its development agenda. The AKDN works in some of the poorest regions of the world, to enable communities to take charge of their own development towards a better life as well as help those even needier than themselves. Not surprisingly, it prioritises those countries where the Ismaili community, followers of the Aga Khan, live as minorities but its services are not confined to them alone. The Aga Khan Foundation, (AKF) is one of the AKDN

⁷²In qualifying the AKDN's mandate and principles, the term 'faith-inspired', as distinct from 'faith-based', was used by the head of the Institute of Ismaili Studies Professor A. Nanji, in an interview on 4th March 2006 with De Cordier (2008).

agencies whose programme priorities are education, health, rural development and civil society with particular emphasis on community participation, gender, the environment, pluralism and human resource development.

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Figure 4: The AKDN

The AKDN works in partnership with other international aid and development

agencies, bi-lateral donors and governments. It draws on the talents of volunteers and professionals of diverse backgrounds and faiths. It is characterised by a view of development which is holistic and long-term, and involves an element of self-help. The Aga Khan sees development as:

A multifaceted process that must be approached from multiple perspectives, and competencies; necessitates the mobilisation and development of the capacity of local communities or beneficiaries to take responsibility for activities designed to produce sustained results, and requires long-term engagement with programmes developing into institutions to become permanent and localised (Aga Khan IV, European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, Tashkent 5th May 2003)

In its day-to-day operations, there is a corporate element within the AKDN that is evident in the insistence on efficiency and effectiveness, accountability and good management practice and in the encouragement of private enterprise (Keshavjee 1998). The Network endorses capitalism but with the qualification that profit should be used to help one's people as well as oneself. It fosters the development of civil society outside the state apparatus to encourage self-sufficiency, responsibility as well as accountability within communities and usually through already established local structures. However, the promotion of capitalist approaches and institutions is mediated by a strong insistence by the Aga Khan that the principles of Islam should permeate the organisation's work and ethos.

Accordingly, AKF programmes promote self – sufficiency through local and international investment, particularly in rural development, health and education. Private enterprise, the Aga Khan holds, can not only encourage competition and stimulate growth but also teach good management skills and organisational structures. These are crucial with respect to health, education and social welfare, where incompetent management and bad governance can lead to an inordinate waste of resources.⁷³ (Keshavjee 1998)

⁷³ In its internal communal organisations the community is likewise encouraged to contribute its professional, technical and other skills through volunteering. The ethic of service is well

As his speeches and the activities of the AKDN agencies indicate, although the Aga Khan looks to the free market to promote societal development, his support of capitalism is qualified. He distinguishes between the motivation and dignity that comes from private ownership and the ethical issues of the accumulation of wealth that is not used for social purposes.⁷⁴ Speaking at convocation at Peshawar University, he said:

It would be traumatic if those pillars of the Islamic way of life, social justice, equality, humility and generosity, enjoined upon us all, were to lose their force or wide application in our young society. It must never be said generations hence that in our greed for the material good of the rich West we have forsaken our responsibilities to the poor, to the orphans, to the traveller, to the single woman (Aga Khan IV, Peshavar University 1967 30th Nov).

With respect to civil society, the AKDN sees it as facilitating the empowerment of non-state actors who can act for themselves and hold their leaders accountable. It does this firstly by seeking out and strengthening local organisations to act as channels of development (DeCordier 2008) and encouraging participation in decision-making and the creation of new initiatives. There is also a sustained programme of capacity building:

- To enable constituents to acquire necessary skills (within-initiative capacity building)
- To generate new knowledge (through scholarships for Masters and PhD programmes regionally and internationally)
- To promote learning through on-the-job practice (leading to localisation) so that the communities build the ability to manage their own development.⁷⁵

established within the community. Equally, the Aga Khan strongly encourages the community to professionalise the use of such resources, including its human resources.

⁷⁴ In Islam the notion of 'charity' as it is understood in Christianity does not exist. There is an ethic of voluntarism, of giving by those who can to those in need, which is conceptualised as simply fulfilling the role of steward in giving back to someone what has been entrusted to one by God, for them. The Muslim obligation is fulfilled to God through the act of service.

⁷⁵ Not all those who acquire higher education choose to return to serve their communities, but the Aga Khan has insisted that these scholarships remain 'without conditions', believing that in the long run those qualified will in some way contribute to the community's development. This is consistent with the long-term view of development over a period of 20-30 years.

This had important implications for this study when AKF was working to localise its operations in enabling the IPD to take charge of its own development (Chapter 8 section 8.3).

The AKDN's funding sources reflect its particular mix of an institution operating in familiar development paradigms but mediated by Islamic principles.

Administrative and new initiative costs are largely borne by the Aga Khan, and the Ismaili community contributes time, expertise and donations. Investments grants from government and private institutional partners and private donations form the rest of its funding base.

The Network is not easy to classify within development terms. Its long-term, multi-sectoral approach to development and its funding arrangements distinguish it from other NGOs and aid agencies. It might be called a trans-national corporation (Martinussen, 1997) since it is sometimes argued that its social activities are designed to create markets for its commercial enterprises although the funds generated by the latter are ploughed back into social services (De Cordier, 2008). However, its social sector engagement with communities differentiates it from other such corporations. Nor does it properly fit the category of faith-based organisations, although its:

....identity and mission are self – consciously derived from the teachings of one or more spiritual or religious traditions which operates on a non-profit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realise collectively articulated ideas about the public good at national or international levels (Marten 2002 cited in Berger, 2003).

The AKDN's work in Tajikistan comes under scrutiny in a number of ways. One concern is that it is replacing the state in its power and reach within communities. Given the recent civil war, it is, perhaps, a fear that, while unfounded, is understandable. Although collectively the agencies of the AKDN can touch almost every aspect of a community's life, it does not directly rival state

institutions. On the contrary, the community is encouraged wherever it lives to contribute to the host society and abide by its legal rules (Aga Khan IV 1987).⁷⁶ Nevertheless, in Tajik perception its range of services renders it more like a state institution than an NGO, particularly in a situation where the state can no longer meet its social obligations to its people (De Cordier, 2008).

FBOs engaged in social development in Tajikistan generally elicit a mixed welcome. The role of the Islamic groups or of groups perceived to be Islamic in the civil war has led to an association of Islam with conflict. The presence of a strongly secular political elite and an urban intelligentsia shaped by the Soviet experience, also contributes to a mistrust of faith-based organisations which have been active in the region since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This ambivalence towards FBOs, is heightened by the growth of socially mobile groups that look to Islam in varying degrees as a source of identity and social cohesion (De Cordier 2008). Finally, the presence of a handful of proselytizing FBOs has deepened suspicion about real or imagined hidden agendas of FBOs in general. However, such organisations do offer much – needed social services and aid to a population still negotiating the transition. While the AKDN is not exactly an FBO and is not suspected of having a proselytising agenda, it is seen as looking after its own in some senses despite its increased presence at national level and in other parts of the country (De Cordier 2008). However, through its work in Rasht,⁷⁷ the AKDN has gained legitimacy beyond Badakhshan both by meeting essential and developmental needs (humanitarian, educational, rural support, health to name a few) as well as by using existing and established social networks for the development of civil society, in line with its own development principles, rather than creating new, alien and alienating structures (De Cordier, 2008; Heathershaw, 2007; Roy, 2000).

⁷⁶ The 1986 Ismaili constitution states: 'This constitution shall apply to Ismailis worldwide, subject only to the overriding effect of any applicable laws of the land of any Ismaili to the extent of any inconsistency' (Aga Khan 1987 p.9).

⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion of the AKDN's activities in other parts of Tajikistan and how these are executed and received, see 'Islamic faith-based development organizations in former Soviet Muslim environments: the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme in the Rasht valley, Tajikistan' De Cordier (2008).

It is important to note the AKDN's efforts in bringing about educational change through institutional change is not a new phenomenon. In Pakistan, the Aga Khan University's Institute of Educational Development, the IED has worked extensively through Professional Development Centres, on school improvement programmes. These have been led by a network of local teacher educators and graduates of the IED called Professional Development Teachers. This approach to building capacity of both, individual but professionally linked educators and, through them, their institutions, has had a measure of success in effecting systemic improvements in education, facilitating the development of local solutions tailored to specific development issues and contexts. (Khamis and Sammons, 2007).⁷⁸ It is this focus on systemic change based, in the case of Badakhshan, on existing structures and institutions that marks the work of the AKF with the IPD.

4.6 The IPD

Set up in 1957, the IPD – Khorog as it is now known, was one of about four regional in-service institutions operating in Tajikistan. The mandate of the institutes was to provide professional development to serving teachers such that each teacher was upgraded at least once every five years. The IPDs (called a methodological institute at that time) ran two week, one month and two month courses for the teachers in pedagogy as well as content. They had specialists in each subject who supported the work of teachers in classrooms, oversaw small research projects by them and produced content material to enhance their teaching in the classroom. They were sometimes required to conduct inspections on behalf of the Regional Education Department to carry out directives handed down from central government. In 1996, the Khorog institute was down-graded to the status of a centre and then an 'office'. The regional government, short of

⁷⁸ Khamis and Sammons (2007) add their voices to those who insist on the importance of context and caution that the theories on educational change from Western contexts will not always serve the developing world well. They highlight the need for systemic change to go hand in hand with school improvement initiatives

resources, hoped that the new Khorog State University, (KSU)⁷⁹ would take on the task of in-service teacher training. In the event, the KSU could not meet that additional mandate. The IPD was up-graded to a Teachers Professional Development Centre in 1998 as AKF began to work with it and was restored to a fully-fledged institution in 2000, with a much enlarged mandate:

To increase capacity at government, management, teacher and community levels in order to enhance the quality of education for all students in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (IPD charter 2000).

This marked the beginning of a major transformation process in the institute. By 2005, the IPD had acquired an entrepreneurial arm (see Chapter 8 section 8.3.4) and in 2009 an early childhood development centre was also created. The trajectory of the IPD's development is charted in the findings chapters in this thesis (Chapters 7 and 8). Timeline 1 below plots the salient features of the IPD history, some of which is the focus of this thesis. Here it is sufficient to note that because Badakhshan was an autonomous region, the IPD was established by edict of the regional, and not the national government. This has had a huge influence on how the institute could evolve as well as how it has managed to outstrip the development of other such regional institutes and, indeed the national IPD.

⁷⁹ The Khorog State University was opened in 1992 to accommodate internally displaced students who had fled the civil war from Dushanbe and other parts of Tajikistan, and to enable upcoming students to access tertiary education.

| Year | Activity |
|------|---|
| 1957 | Institute of Teacher Training Established in Khorog |
| 1996 | Refocused as a Methodology Centre |
| 1997 | Started cooperation with AKF Education |
| 1998 | Upgraded to Teacher's Professional Development Centre. AKF provided material support: resources, computers, renovation of the centre |
| 2000 | Institute for Professional Development |
| 2001 | AKF implementation staff transferred to IPD. Budget and operation plans were distinct but reform activities were integrated |
| | Appointment of the first Institutional development specialist at the IPD by AKF |
| 2003 | Formal grantee of AKF. Staff, budgets and programmes fully integrated |
| 2005 | Establishment of NGO 'Logos' to generate income through printing and courses for the community on demand in English, Mathematics, Science |

Timeline 1: IPD History

4.7 Conclusion

This brief discussion of the Badakhshani community's life-world and the origin and development of the AKDN, clarifies the nature of the particular faith – oriented link between the two 'actors' that makes this case study unusual. The particular circumstances that led to the AKDN's presence within the community served to intensify that link in the first instance as Chapter 6 demonstrates. Over time, however, perspectives changed as the immediate threat of starvation faded and minds turned to development issues as Chapters 7 and 8 reveal. Nevertheless, It is this link that contextualises this case study and lends a

particular, and evolving, meaning to this encounter as the findings chapters demonstrate.

Drawing together the insights from chapters 2-4 what is evident is that sweeping, imposed, sudden changes are not new to these communities. Their Soviet past attests to that as does their current experience of FSU transition. There are certain parallels even while there are important differences in the two phases of history (see Chapter 9). The question that arises is this. Could knowledge of how the community dealt with the changes that the Soviets brought in, not just in relation to education but in relation to the communities' life-worlds, helped to inform how educational changes have been currently introduced? As the data and discussion in second half of this thesis shows, there are continuities in the responses to change that might have informed current interventions. The next chapter delineates the methodology for this study that led to these findings.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the methodology for the study. The first section considers the ontological and epistemological issues that guided my choice of a qualitative approach and a case study research design. I discuss how my prior presence affected the research process, and my use of reflexivity to make transparent my multiple roles in the field. The next section explains the selection of the data-generation tools and their efficacy in the field context. In doing this, the chapter continues to build on the discussion of the complex and evolving connection of context and people introduced in Chapter I and which informs the findings in Part Two. A consideration of the ethical implications of the study, reflections during the fieldwork about how the thesis was evolving as well as a discussion of data analysis processes concludes this part of the study.

5.2 A qualitative study

Mine is a qualitative study. Qualitative researchers hold that social reality cannot be apprehended as a single, objective, unchangeable, universal 'whole'. We construct it, bringing to it our socio-historical identities, contexts and world-views. Hence it is open to multiple (sometimes alternative) readings (Creswell, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), since human experience, histories, social and cultural locations are diverse. It is both subjective (and so can be understood in relative terms only) and subject to change (being shaped and re-shaped by changing perspectives, ideologies, time and circumstances). A major strength of qualitative research is that it acknowledges this dynamic nature of social reality and invites reflection on and engagement with it through the study of phenomena:

'.....in their natural settings, paying due attention to context and interactions and is concerned with how people see, experience and understand the(ir) world and attempting to make sense of,

or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 p. 3)⁸⁰

My interest in how educators at the IPD understand and negotiate changes (both imposed and invited, in the context of transition and through their encounter with a development network that links them to their faith, emphasizes context, experience and meaning. My primary concern is not with the efficacy of innovations introduced at the IPD, nor with the application of models of educational change discussed in Chapter 3 section 3.2.4. This is neither an evaluative nor a hypothesis – testing study, both of which might have been better served by being positioned in the positivist paradigm. I was interested in the processes of change generated by a particular encounter between two institutions operating within certain broader and local contexts (those of post – Soviet transition and faith-inspired development). That engagement called for a qualitative approach.

Another strength of qualitative research following from the first premise is that it acknowledges the place of the researcher within the research. As a social (human) being, s/he also brings her/his own experiences, history, identity and world view to the enquiry. This basic presence of the researcher was further nuanced in my case. I was AKF's education programme manager in Badakhshan (1998 -2002). For a while, therefore, I was a part of the phenomenon which I am studying. This (prior) presence made itself felt in various ways. It cast me in multiple roles (ref: Coffey 1999; Narayan 1993) (ex-programme manager, friend, and researcher) that I had to negotiate throughout the research process. There were repeated references by the participants to the time when I managed the AKF programme, to illustrate changes through comparison, to confirm recollections, to challenge or re-visit decisions made at that time, as well as to point out my omissions and mistakes. I was also confronted by my own tacit knowledge when analyzing the data (see section 5.4): a qualitative approach enabled me to account for these factors in the research.

⁸⁰ For a more comprehensive definition of qualitative research see Denzin and Lincoln's borrowing of Nelson et.al (2000 p. 7).

Finally, an important feature of qualitative research, and one that became significant for my enquiry, is the scope which it affords for an emergent design allowing ideas, themes and categories to form as the work progresses. (Creswell, 2007). Filstead (1979) captures the process well:

The qualitative paradigm (naturalistic inquiry) is a dynamic interchange between theory, concepts, and data with constant feedback....modification of theory and concepts based on the data collected. This emerging, refined 'explanation framework' gives direction to where additional data needs to be collected. It is marked by a concern with the discovery of theory rather than the verification of theory (Filstead 1979, p. 28 cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

This dynamic interchange between concepts and data certainly manifested itself in my research process, although my enquiry is not concerned with the 'discovery of theory' per se. I had planned (see timeline in section 5.5) to collect data in one field visit (in 2004) and confirm it in the next (2006). However, when I went back (in 2006) the situation had changed dramatically. The participants' confirmation of how things were in 2004 was continuously qualified by how they were different 'now', in 2006. This led me to interrogate how and why the processes of institutional change had altered and evolved. These fresh insights form the basis of Chapter 8 and resulted in a narrative that is more complex and, I hope, more complete than that which I had envisaged.

The essence of a qualitative approach - and one which has resonance in my work - is succinctly captured by (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009):

At the backdrop to the increasing popularity of qualitative methods stands what may be called a qualitative stance. From this stance, the processes and phenomena of the world are described before theorized, understood before explained, and seen as concrete qualities before abstract quantities. The qualitative stance involves focusing on the cultural, everyday and situated aspects of human thinking, learning, knowing, acting and ways of understanding ourselves as persons, and it is opposed to 'technified' approaches to the study of human lives (Kvale and Brinkman 2009, p. 12).

A concern with understanding educational change in the context of FSU transition; the exploration of what that meant in a particular faith – inspired, development encounter of two institutions; my own prior involvement with the region; all these factors advocated and permeated a qualitative approach to this enquiry.

5.3 Delimiting factors

This study is delimited by my choice of the IPD as a field site and the IPD-AKF encounter as a focus. I did not look at what changed in schools as a result of IPD training on pedagogy, educational management, teaching/learning strategies and school improvement programmes. Nor did I use an economic lens focusing on cost-effectiveness, the decentralization of budgetary responsibilities to schools and communities and the impact of user fees to examine educational change, although economics has had an enormous impact on the system. My particular focus is on *processes* of educational change at the IPD, through the IPD-AKF encounter: it is that interaction and what it generates between the two institutions and their staff in particular, which is the sole focus of this study.

A second delimiting factor of this thesis is that it draws on sources in English only. I speak Tajik (the national language) and conducted interviews in it. When necessary, I worked with a translator. However, written sources in all three languages. Russian, Tajik and Shugni⁸¹ used in Tajikistan were not directly accessible to me. Tajikistan is not well represented in the research literature and Badakhshan, even less so.⁸² To compensate for the dearth of published sources, I have drawn on the excellent and detailed PhD studies available to me⁸³ to add

⁸¹ Shugni is the language that most Badakhshanis speak, although for some, Tajik is their first language.

⁸² There are, however, some excellent studies on Kyrgyzstan (Amsler, 2007; Reeves, 1991) for example.

⁸³ Niyozov's (2001) study on the lives and work of teachers in post – Soviet Badakhshan provided useful insights from a local educator on education in the region. Keshavjee's (1998)

to my own understanding of the region. Keshavjee's (1998) study focuses on health issues in post – Soviet Badakhshan, while Niyzov (2001) looks at teachers' lives and work in schools in post-Soviet Tajikistan. I seek to make visible the processes of educational change through the institutional changes at the middle level of the system that the IPD and AKF were engaged in. And I chose a case study design to capture the complexity of actors and action, behaviours, structures, attitudes, beliefs, and practices that characterized the transformation processes.

5.4 A case study approach

The term 'case study' is variously used to indicate both an approach to research and the 'focal object' of that research. A case study approach is a form of enquiry that differs from other forms of social research such as the survey or the experiment because it is holistic in its view of the 'case', uses 'thick description' (Geertz 1973) to examine a whole setting (community or organisation) and uses multiple data collection methods to this end. (Hammersly and Gomm 2000).

There is no agreement on what comprises a 'case' or what its unit of analysis should be. It could be a classroom, a programme a policy, or a population (Stake 2000b). It can be almost anything (Gomm and Hammersley, 2000; Robson, 2002; Yin, 1993; Yin, 1994) so long as the 'case' operates as an 'a functioning, specific One' (Stake, 2000 p 436), an entity that is a recognizable, organic, whole unit or system, 'bounded' (usually in time and space) in which all the parts are interlinked and function together in a coherent system.

The case study method:

...is distinctive in the first place by giving prominence to what is and is not 'the case' – the boundaries are kept in focus. What is happening and deemed important within those boundaries

work, while focusing on medicines and transitions in public health services, captures social change in post - Soviet Badakhshan in depth.

(the emic) is considered vital and usually determines what the study is about... (Stake 2000b, p.23).

Cases can be intrinsic, unique and interesting in and of themselves, or instrumental and hence representative of a phenomenon that manifests itself in other similar circumstances. They may be positioned in the positivist paradigm (as Yin 1993; 1994 situates them) or in the interpretive paradigm (as Stake 2000; 2005 develops them).

Creswell's definition is succinct:

Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes (Creswell 2007, p 73).

The characteristics of a case study design render it particularly suitable for my enquiry for a number of reasons. My study is bounded (Stake, 2000a) in space (the geographically isolated but strategically important,⁸⁴ mountainous, rural, province of Badakhshan in Tajikistan), in time (the post – Soviet transition) and in focus (the AKF-IPD encounter). It looks at a given contemporary phenomenon (educational change at the IPD) within a real-life context (Burton, 2000; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Robson, 2002). I ask the 'how', 'why' and 'what' questions that typify case studies (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). My study is 'constructed out of (a) naturally occurring social situation(s)' (Hammersley and Gomm 2000, p. 3) in which phenomena and context are closely interlinked (Yin 1994). I concur with Yin's assertion that:

You would use the case study method because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study (Yin 2003, p.13, cited in Creswell 2007)

⁸⁴ Not only does Badakhshan share a border with both China and Afghanistan but, since 9/11 the geopolitics of the region has enhanced its position.

Finally my work prioritises the people in the system and I had little control over events (Hammersley and Gomm, 2000). The 'lack of control' also extended to how I was perceived in the field, and led me to be reflexive about my work.

5.4.1 Reflexivity

I had naively assumed that my prior presence in Badakhshan was relevant simply as an impetus to this study and in making access easier. However, during the field work it became increasingly apparent that my own involvement in what I was researching could not be ignored. What we had *done* together when I was the education programme manager (1998-2002), how I had *led*, what mistakes I had made, how both institutions (AKF and IPD) were organized at that time were constant reference points for comparisons with the current situation in our discussions and conversations. This was one way in which what had changed came to the fore and was defined. This referencing of what occurred in my time there, how I was perceived by participants and senior managers, (section 5.5.1) and not least my intuitive and tacit knowledge of what was implied in interviews, and the nuances of my analysis of action or policies: all meant that I had to clarify my own position in the field. At first I was not sure how to do this. A case study approach alone could not capture my place in this research. It was the literature from the fields of cultural studies, anthropology and ethnography that discusses the researcher as data and, specifically, the concept of reflexivity that helped me to position myself.

5.4.2 'Insiders' and 'outsiders'

The situation of the researcher within the research has been explored from a number of perspectives: feminism, ethnography and auto ethnography, and cultural studies, each with a slightly different emphasis but all focused on concerns about the authenticity of representation, equity and power relations. The debate ranges over whether researchers are 'outsiders' – and hence suspect

as someone who can represent the 'other'- or 'insiders' – and hence over-empathetic and biased (Bishop 2000). This outsider/insider dichotomy is challenged and broadened by scholars like Narayan, (1993) and Burton, (2000) who maintain that it is the quality of the relations between the researcher and the researched that is important.⁸⁵

I found it difficult to situate myself in the more polarized debates about outsiders and insiders. I was neither and both: I am not Badakhshani, but I share the same faith and I had lived amongst the community for close to four years. Tilman's argument, that what counts is whether the researcher has sufficient cultural knowledge to 'accurately interpret and validate' (Tilman cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005 p. 7) the experiences of a particular group, and Narayan's assertion that the issue is one of positioning researchers:

...in terms of shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations (Narayan 1993, p. 671)

better describe my situation. My identity as a former programme manager facilitated access; my identity as a researcher made me more equal with participants, but also drew reservations in some senior management quarters (see section 5.5.1); the 'manager/leader' identity invited professional discussions beyond the research agenda, and the identity as a friend drew both support and confidential disclosures. Finally, the research itself was perceived as a site for voicing contestations (see sections 5.8.1 and 5.8.2). These identities were never neatly parcelled, but shifted constantly between each other in the space of a day or even an interview.

My issue was not just with my multiple identities in the field. As Coffey (2000) argues so cogently, the process of identification continues beyond the fieldwork

⁸⁵ It is from the fields of ethnography and feminist research among others that the issue of the positionality of the researcher in relation to his/her, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class and other intersecting and overlapping identities as well as their relationships with their subjects has been discussed.

stage (Coffey1999). In writing up, I sometimes struggled with *how* I knew what I knew. Over my time in Badakhshan I had acquired a certain knowledge that informed how I analyzed what I saw. I found it hard to examine and articulate how this tacit knowledge came into play. My earlier link with the field:

Affected what data I collected: I was often given privileged insights into what was 'going on' at both institutions which deepened my perspective and analysis

Made it possible to locate events and people in a 'history': I could trace progress on initiatives begun when I was programme manager, see whether they had flourished, floundered or been dropped altogether, and ask why

Enabled me to see how people had grown and changed: the actors were not 'frozen' in the data collection period but people whose ideas and lives had developed and changed

Gave me a 'language' to interpret with: the lens of prior knowledge allowed me to infer from and interrogate data in a way that a newcomer to the field could not. For instance, since I had been witness to some of the changes in structures, programmes and overall direction I was able to detect shifts in emphasis or usage that would otherwise have been invisible

Continued to provide a reference point for data: as the conversations between me and those who contributed to this research continued, we could both draw on past memories to frame current events.

My knowledge of the two institutions and the culture of Badakhshan informed how I analyzed and interpreted the data. I came to realize, as Coffey, (1999), posits, that my previous professional and personal connection with the field was not a problem to be managed but an asset that marked a very particular epistemological engagement with the study. Challenging conventional approaches to the emotional aspects of fieldwork Coffey observes that these:

..are considered as issues to be acknowledged and, if possible, dealt with, rather than seen as epistemologically productive in the analysis of fieldwork and the fieldworker self (Coffey 1999 p.6).

However, while insisting on the need to acknowledge the situated self in the fieldwork and beyond, she also cautions that the researcher should be careful not to make the self the key focus of the research (Coffey 1999 p. 37).

I tried to be continuously reflexive, both to keep in perspective ‘the visibility of self in the field and in the text’ (Coffey 1999 p. 17) and to balance the impact of that visibility through what Kvale and Brinkmann call ‘reflexive objectivity’. This involves being reflexive about ones contributions as a researcher to the production of knowledge and hence ‘sensitive to one’s prejudices, one’s subjectivity’ (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.242)

5.5 Data Collection

I collected data in two field visits (see timeline 2 below). The first field visit took place in 2004. The second was meant to confirm data but, instead, gave rise to fresh data (see section 5.8.4). I also, of course, drew on my own knowledge gained during my prior presence in Badakhshan as AKF’s education programme manager.

| Year | Activity |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1998 (October) – 2002 (June) | AKF Education Programme Manager |
| 2004 (April – July) | First field visit |
| 2006 (June) | Second field visit |

Timeline 2: My presence in Badakhshan

Contextual issues dominated the data collection and some of these are discussed below.

5.5.1 Gaining entry

Access had been negotiated beforehand with the IPD and AKF.⁸⁶ Prior presence made settling in, gaining trust, and identifying key informants relatively easy. However, it also elicited a measure of guardedness, especially from some senior management staff. Neither institution was used to having researchers in their midst. Consequently, while my person was familiar, and welcome, my return as a researcher caused some unease. I shared their concern that frustration, stress or disaffection could blur the boundary between information giving and simply giving vent to grievances by participants: this might distort what I 'saw'. I addressed the issue by setting up a feedback loop with AKF and IPD senior management through fortnightly meetings to discuss my impressions and findings and seek comments and clarification. Their over-committed schedules meant that meetings were frequently cancelled, but I continued to seek opportunities to talk about the data with them as and when possible. Despite these reservations, access to IPD and AKF staff and government officials, as well as to schools and community was easy and open. I provided participants with a letter (see Appendix 9) outlining the nature and purpose of the enquiry and their rights as participants in accordance with the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines (2004). However, because I was well known, the participants found the exercise of providing written consent superfluous and, in some cases, it aroused rather than allayed concerns because it, in itself was a signed confirmation of their involvement. This was particularly the case with the focus groups because they had to be framed within the school setting (see I found it easier to tell them orally what it was I was doing and why and ask if they would help me do it. I was in the field twice: once in 2004 and again in 2006 (see timeline 2 – my presence in Badakhshan –above).

⁸⁶ Since I was already a familiar figure, this involved emails rather than a formal letter. Likewise consent for interviews as well as consent forms were abandoned because they proved to be redundant.

5.6 Data collection tools

I used multiple strategies to generate data. I went back to the research questions to help me generate the tools. Semi –structured interviews (section 5.6.2) enabled me to understand the participants' perspectives and responses to changes including the main societal changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union, educational changes, perceptions of the AKDN (see Appendix 1). Career biographies (section 5.6.5) allowed me to know what people did during and immediately after the civil war and before the arrival of the AKDN. Given that this was a traumatic time in people's lives a focus on how their professional situation changed was a safer terrain on which to approach the time. Focus groups with teachers and conversations with the community helped to broaden that picture, although the latter provide more productive than the former (see section 5.6.6). Document analysis (section 5.6.3) and observations (section 5.6.4) served to reveal features of structural or systemic changes that interviews alone might not capture. They provided a broader perspective to organisational change. Data was also generated through informal conversations in my day-to-day interactions with the participants and the community (see section 5.6.2).

I used purposive sampling (Creswell 2007) to identify the various stakeholders and key informants for my study. As Table 1 below indicates, I paid attention to representation from AKF and the IPD, length of service in education, gender balance and positions within each organization. I took into account whether the local educators had always worked with the IPD or had been transferred from AKF to the IPD. I also ensured that the study benefited from a wider perspective by including non-educational personnel at the AKF and non-IPD educators (head teachers, teachers and the Regional Educational Department personnel). Finally, I kept in close touch with community views on general and educational matters, to capture their perspective on what was 'going on' in Gorno Badakhshan.

| | AKF | IPD | AKF non- education staff | Non-IPD educators (head teachers) | Regional level: district level |
|---|------------|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Interviews and career biographies | 5 | 13 + 1 career biography | 2**(career biographies) | 3 | 5 |
| Focus groups | | | | 4* | |

Table 1: Participants interviewed

* Two of the focus groups comprised teachers: the other two comprised parent committee members.

** The career biographies, dated from the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, were those of two AKF staff, one younger (under 30), one older (40), one of whom was an educator, the other was not, and one older IPD staff member (over 40).

Of the 14 IPD staff interviewed, 7 were men, 7 women. 8 had been AKF staff to begin with and transferred to the IPD when implementations of AKF programmes were handed over to the IPD (see Chapter 7 section 7.2.2). Two of the head teachers were from the state system; the third was from the Aga Khan Lycee,⁸⁷ the first private school in Gorno Badakhshan. In all, a total of 29 people were interviewed. Additionally, two focus groups each were held with teachers and with parents.

⁸⁷ The term is used in the Russian educational context, where it denotes a private school as well as attesting to a particular standard of education. 'Gymnasiums' are other such special status schools in the system.

Each tool had its strengths and problems. These are discussed in section 5.6. The contingencies of the field demanded flexibility and creativity throughout the data collection process. Negotiating time and space proved to be particularly challenging.

5.6.1 The physical context – time and space in Badakhshan

The town of Khorog comprises two main streets bounded by steep mountains on one side and the river on the other. Space is at a premium and privacy difficult. The IPD has a staff of 60 and a work space of 12 rooms. Everyone except the director and the institutional specialist shared offices. I could not conduct an interview at the IPD without someone walking into the room. Public spaces such as restaurants are limited and all too public: it is impossible to meet anyone there unobserved or uninterrupted in this tight-knit community. Homes afforded some privacy, but April, May and June are difficult months for the Badakhshanis. Winter food stocks are low and spring comes late to the region. We often met over lunch at my home, turning the interviews into conversations and combining research with hospitality. 'Semi-structured' came to mean 'interspersed with other activities' as well as just the interview format. Conversations begun in one interview were taken up again at social gatherings a week later. But the research was enriched by this additional perspective of 'work -talk cum everyday- living talk'.

Time was also problematic. Meetings might be cancelled because the Regional Education Director had suddenly been called away to Dushanbe, and no-one knew when he would return. Unpredictable weather delayed planes⁸⁸ for days. Landslides could block roads and wash away bridges, turning the 18 -hour road journey from Dushanbe to Khorog into a 36-hour one. Interviews were rescheduled because Central Government officials had arrived unannounced

⁸⁸ Planes may turn back from circling above the town because it is too misty to land on the very narrow airstrip along the river and they are not equipped with radar.

(because telephone lines were down) to assess the IPD's progress. They could stay for a day, a week, perhaps longer. No-one could tell. Data collection therefore had to constantly be adjusted to accommodate unpredictable changes: flexibility and patience were required in equal - and abundant - measure.

5.6.2 Interviews and conversations

In qualitative research, interviewing is recognised as a process in which both the researcher and the subject are actively involved in meaning-making work (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997) in which knowledge is 'co-constructed' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Interviewing understood as an interactive, meaning-constructing activity also acknowledges the researcher as an actively -engaged participant rather than an aloof collector of information. Since the aim of this study was to understand the participants' experience of educational change, and because there was a history of shared experience between us, semi-structured interviewing (Fontana and Frey, 2000b), I developed semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1) knowing that some of our conversations would range beyond just my research.

Kvale and Brinkmann, (2009) assert that:

The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation; it is an 'inter'view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. An interview is literally an 'inter view, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009 p. 2).

Knowledge gained in an interview, therefore, is not a simple transaction of information but:

..is constituted by the interaction itself, in the specific situation created between the interviewer and the interviewee. With another interviewer, a different interaction may be created and

a different knowledge produced⁸⁹ (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009 p. 32).

The interview sample (see appendix 4), illustrates this well. In it, reference is made to someone who was applying for another job, the participant's views on women working late, the issues which s/he felt that I had not handled well during my time at the AKF, all in the process of talking about educational change. Semi-structured interviews helped to create an interaction rather than a more formal and perhaps limited question and answer session. I had developed the tool in the UK but found I needed to adjust it in the field for a number of reasons. One, as my journal entry (see appendix 5) attests,

'I am worried about my data. I have very little on the IPD in soviet times and I keep making the mistake of asking about changes since I left so that I have not got a long view from a lot of people. Need to change that. What sense will I make out of this data and what do I do about my methodology? I think one thing will come out clearly is that my own involvement could not be ignored, B has a role to play too.' (Journal entry excerpt April-July 2004: see Appendix 5)

was to make sure that the participants and I did not tip the balance of the focus to only looking at changes since I had left. In that sense, the career biographies, because they focused on the persons themselves, were less likely to make references in time to my presence or absence. Another change was that not all questions could be or needed to be asked to all participants. I did not pilot the interviews formally but I did realise fairly quickly that not all the 'getting comfortable' questions were not always necessary in cases where I had known the participants well. For example if the person was in the AKF or the IPD because I had hired them in my time there then the question 'Tell me about yourself. How did you come to be a(i.e. in current position). Some further and different questions also had to be specifically directed to the policy makers on what reforms had been introduced after the collapse of the Soviet Union and

⁸⁹ In Badakhshan, even a change of venue would alter the interaction between the same actors a different interaction would obtain.

what further changes were planned in the educational system (see Appendix 1: questions 2a). Asking the same questions to other educators would elicit the response 'I don't know about that' or 'we don't discuss/decide that' which enabled me to see the degree of participation but did not give me the policy rationale for some actions.

Informal conversations complemented interviewing as a main source of data collection. I define such conversations as those spontaneous interactions in which I was continuously immersed, at the market, in the bus, on walks along the river or in the park and over dinners at the participants' homes or mine. Conversations meandered over food prices, children, the new road to China, what happened at work and what pre-occupied the participants. They usually centred on what the participants wanted to share rather than being led by me (Kvale, 1996). Research –related issues featured in them, but not as the sole or even the main focus. The data collected from these interactions was often richer because it linked work with everyday living. The participants were fully aware that I was gathering material for my research all the time, and I checked its use back with them, but I have also been a friend for some for over 6 years so I shared a part of their lives as well.

5.6.3 Documentation

In this largely oral culture, where, even tertiary examinations are oral, documentation presents a persistent challenge. In the past, reports were written to justify expenditure or action and to prove that work was done rather than for the purposes of learning, visioning or strategising. Researchers who have been working in the FSU and particularly in the Central Asian Republics speak of the paucity of documentation and statistical data in the region (Heyneman and De Young 2004; Niyoxov 2001).

Engaging in critical thinking and analysis through the act of writing (as opposed to

oral articulation) was, as I had discovered when I was programme manager, a feature of post – Soviet times.⁹⁰ Previously, reports were mainly written to confirm decisions or provide statistical data on success. I bore this in mind when analysing documents paying particular attention to three salient factors:

Authorship and scope, especially in documents related to strategic vision and direction, it was important to know whether these were generated by expatriates with local input or by local educators themselves

Change in content, particularly with respect to the implementation of programmes, helped to indicate local ownership, growth or change in what had been expatriate – led initiatives in the past

Variety and coverage, with respect to materials for teachers, captured any developments in the application of or adaptation of approaches initiated by expatriate programme leaders and now used and delivered by local staff

I learnt that the ‘discourse of documentation’ can take two forms, depending on the purpose of the document, its content and the audience.

Firstly, documents were not seen as sites for reflection or debate. As I had observed when I was programme manager, the resolutions in official meetings were foregone conclusions, worded before the meeting and ratified during it without comment or changes. Process and account could therefore be at variance with each other, and this had important implication for the operation of the governance structures discussed in chapter 8 Section 8.2.1.

Secondly, the ‘hidden text’ in the documents sometimes determined the main text of the work. Speaking about how he came to learn more about his faith, one participant cited a book written by a communist leader and told me:

Everyone thinks he is against Ismailis but when you read it again you realize that he is actually telling you about Ismailism. Because he says “the Ismailis are bad communists because

⁹⁰ Analytical report writing is something that is still being developed and one of the ways that I could reciprocate the hospitality of the staff of the University of Central Asia who accommodated me and provided me with resources such as paper, cassettes, access to email etc. was by conducting a report-writing workshop for them.

they believe this and do that.” It’s the only way he could talk about the faith in those times and not get his book banned (MYMCDK).

As well as noting omissions, then, ‘reading between the lines’ could actually mean ‘reading *against* the lines’.

I examined a series of formal documents in English and in Tajik. Statutory documents, such as the Law on Education and the charter of the IPD and LOGOS, were obtained in both languages, and I cross-checked the translations where appropriate. Other documents related to implementation: donor evaluations, work plans, minutes of meetings, organograms, monitoring reports, workshop plans and emails and selected sections translated from local books (see appendix 2). I was also aware of documentation that did not exist, for instance the absence of an overall strategy for IPD.

5.6.4 Observations

Researchers observe in two ways. They are present at set events or specific settings (a classroom or a training session) by prior arrangement, carrying out what Robson calls ‘marginal participant observation’ (Robson 2002 p. 138) in which the researcher is present (as a member of an audience, for example) but passive. However, observation is also a continuous, generic activity during fieldwork, as Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007) argue, and hence is more of a methodological approach rather than a data collection method. I engaged in both types of observations.

I observed AKF and IPD staff at work in selected, set situations. I participated in a series of meetings, including a stakeholders meeting of AKDN and Government partners, an AKF-IPD meeting where programming issues in relation to one problematic grant were being discussed and an IPD meeting outlining a proposed

mentoring programme for selected schools. I was interested in the intra- and inter-institutional interactions. These observations helped shed important light on the internal dynamics of decision-making and control at the institutional levels. They served as an important form of triangulation, sometimes corroborating interview data, or yielding information which might not have been so readily gained through other methods (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007)

The rest of the observations occurred simply as a part of the routine of the fieldwork. I dropped into the IPD for brief periods to chat with staff on their breaks or while I waited for another appointment or for a document to be found for me. I noticed much about the relationships within IPD during these times: who turned to whom for help, which doors remained closed and which were open, who worked late and how often, who occupied the computer room or the library and who stayed within their own rooms. The observations added to data obtained by other means, on organisational culture in particular. I observed patterns of hierarchical relationships, mutual support and/or competition within and between programme teams. It was possible to gauge the intensity of workflow and communication networks: Chapters 7 and 8 in particular draw on the data collected through observations in addition to interview, conversation and documentary data.

5.6.5 Career biographies or histories

While the semi-structured interviews looked at the changes since 1996, career biographies (see Appendix 3) provided a sense of what educators did immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union and before the AKDN was fully on the scene as well as how they were currently negotiating institutional change. I had initially planned on working with life stories. David Stephens (2007) says of life histories:

Essentially life history research concerns the relationship between two interdependent worlds: that of the individual with their unique life story and that of the past, present and future

contextual worlds through which the individual travels (Stephens 2007 p 66).

He goes on to say:

a particular strength of life history is its potential to bestride the micro-macro interface more effectively than many other forms of qualitative research (Ibid p. 67).

However, after doing one life-history interview, I realised that what I really needed were career history interviews. The essay into childhood memories, while fascinating, was both time-consuming and took me away from my focus. Hence I chose to collect selective 'career histories'. I felt that where the scope and depth of change has permeated every aspect of the community's lives, career histories are an extremely important methodological tool for understanding the impact of changes on personal and communal lives and how that interfaces with people's professional lives. I asked participants to focus on the period just before the collapse of the Soviet Union, although some went further back in their lives: digression is a recognised problem with respect to biographies. The career life histories helped me to hone in on how people coped during the civil war and, as noted above in section 5.6.2 my presence or absence was not a 'marker' in talking about changes. Further, while people were reluctant to talk directly about the conflict as I found when I interviewed one teacher, when asked to talk about how/why they changed careers or directions they were more ready to engage with the conversation and then the questions on the impact of civil war could be asked. I therefore changed the order of my questions. I used the questions about the arrival of the AKDN both to understand perceptions of the institution at the time but also move away from the more painful memories of the civil war itself. I confined the career histories to just a few salient questions to enable the participants to talk as they remembered without too much interruption from me. As well as AKF and IPD staff, selected with due regard to professional, age and gender balance (see table 1), I also conducted one connoisseur interview from a family unconnected with either the IPD or the AKF: I considered it important to get a glimpse of how things were for those outside the AKDN institutions. Besides this more formal interview, I continued to draw on general conversations with the community and with my translator (see section 5.6.7) to supplement what

I was told about the community by AKF and IPD staff and in particular about how they coped during and in the aftermath of the civil war.

I found that not only were these career biographies immensely useful in providing the background to the community, but also that they held a very important place in the hearts and minds of those I talked to:

You are doing such an important work. Come and talk to my wife. She can tell you so much more about the civil war and what happened to her family. Their whole house was burnt down. Someone needs to collect these stories. This is very important research (AYMAD).

I realized that only now, fifteen years after the civil war, were people ready to look back and tell their stories through the protective lens of elapsed time. They could not share them with each other, since the suffering was common: it needed an 'outsider-insider' to draw them out.

5.6.6 Focus groups

Focus groups are often used for triangulation purposes: to activate and corroborate collective memory, and to qualify and offer alternatives to given perspectives (Fontana and Frey, 2000). I held focus groups with teachers and parents. These stakeholders constitute the front-line beneficiaries of the IPD programmes. I hoped to capture a wider and different range of perspectives in the community. My questions covered two themes: views about the changes in the education system since the Soviet time and recently, and the changing perspectives of the community on their own role in the education of their children.

However, this proved to be the most problematic data collection tool primarily because:

Language was a barrier: although we spoke Tajik, asides and dissent were almost always articulated in Shugni (which I do not understand). The respondents used my translator's voice as a cover for theirs, making me suspect that they had something to say about what had just been discussed and was being translated to me. However, I could neither pursue their comments nor return to them: they were too quiet for the tape recorder to capture.

Authority figures dominated: the lack of civic space meant that focus groups could only be held on school premises. Hence, unbeknown to me, even when the head teacher was not a part of the group, an informal power figure, a wife or a relative who was a teacher in the school, was present. Younger members of staff likewise were constrained by hierarchical dynamics, which I became aware of but could not entirely circumvent in the focus group setting.

Timing was problematic: the summer vacation had begun and the research was taking teachers and parents away from crucial work on the land.

I was not a familiar figure: the teachers and parents in the villages knew who I was, but did not know me well. The research setting (tape recorder, consent forms) added a formality to the process that detracted from a relaxed and frank discussion.

Researchers are trained in focus group techniques to draw in the quiet ones, to probe responses, to generate debate and to capture dissenting voices. In this particular context, group meetings are located in a tradition where often one speaker takes the role of group representative. Dissent or contradiction would not be vocalised instantly, but in pairs and small groups later on. Respect would demand a certain time-lag, or another intervention before the previous one is returned to. Although the data from the groups was manually recorded and transcribed, I could not capture all of it in sufficient depth and clarity to use it as extensively as I had hoped. With hindsight, I would work with smaller groups of not more than six, and would identify local helpers, and orient them to focus group techniques to work with me.

5.6.7 Translator as partner

Translation, particularly oral translation, is not taught or learnt as a discipline in Badakhshan: anyone fluent in the requisite languages can be a translator.⁹¹ To compensate for this, I had impressed on my translator the importance of verbatim renditions of what was said and discussed the concept of 'translator transparency' with him, pre-empting the temptation to interpret and to précis conversations. I insisted that we spoke Tajik wherever possible. I took notes while interviewing, and made sure that he did so as well. We gave the translated data back to the participants for verification and correction, to overcome any residual barriers to understanding that might have escaped us.

However, I had not anticipated the strength of community traditions. My Badakhshani translator was a virtual stranger to Khorog. Yet the participants insisted on making his presence visible in various ways:

- Interviews began with him with questions concerning what village did he come from, and who were his kith and kin to identify any links with his family⁹²
- He was drawn into the conversations to confirm or reinforce points made to me⁹³
- His opinions were sought before the interviews (how long did he think the interview would last?) and after (had they told me too much?)

My translator was also an important source of community perspectives, providing

⁹¹ This had worried me at the outset, since my translator was unfamiliar with oral translation and the first couple of trial interviews did not go well. But this was an issue of initial nervousness rather than incompetence, and the work proceeded smoothly after that.

⁹² A head teacher whom I interviewed had stayed with the family when he had been on visits to the village years ago and knew the (deceased) father well; shopkeepers were discovered to be cousins; other educators had been to school with his father and so on.

⁹³ If reference was made to a trait such as 'we Badakhshanis are honest' or 'not impressed by official status' etc. then this was usually prefaced by 'B. knows...'

insights into, for example, what people thought about the new road to China, how parents felt about the entry process to the one private school in Khorog. He searched for books from the library and from friends that he considered might be useful for me, and identified people in the community that I might not otherwise have talked to. He, together with a couple of key informants, continued to provide me with information on changes in the field as I wrote this thesis.

5.7 Ethical concerns

Ethical issues in research often arise from the tension between commitment to maintaining the integrity of the research and the need to pre-empt any negative effects of the enquiry on participants. My main concerns revolved around how to strike a balance between the two. I used the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines (2004) to help me navigate the delicate issues outlined below, as well as those already mentioned above (consent, accounting for my own presence, checking back).

5.7.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

In a small and tightly-knit community such as Badakhshan, the problem of ensuring anonymity is accentuated: 'senior management', for example, can only refer to a certain limited number of people. I developed a code to veil identities, and have avoided using participants' job titles and other identifiers unless absolutely central to the argument. However, I am uncertain whether every identity in this research can be totally protected.

Another concern was how to deal with private conversations between friends as opposed to research interviews. I needed to draw on both to maintain the integrity of the study, but the participants' right to confidentiality had to be protected. Here, two factors are pertinent. Firstly, priorities, personnel, perspectives and organisational culture have changed significantly in AKF and

IPD since the fieldwork. The twin lenses of lapsed time and changed circumstance now make the participants' communications valuable, but not volatile. Secondly, I use confidential communications to infer, rather than to quote, from. Where direct quotations are used, I first checked those with the participants as far as possible.⁹⁴

5.7.2 Validity and generalisability

The question of validity is the subject of much debate in social science research. Originally premised on positivist concepts of numerical verification the definition has been broadened to encompass ideas of authenticity (Guba and Lincoln 1989) and confidence in results (Hammersley 1992). It is argued that it is the quality of accounts that is important, since social scientists acknowledge that they represent rather than reproduce reality in their research. I tried to establish internal validity (Schofeld 2000) in a number of ways:

5.7.3 Triangulation

Triangulation, or more appropriately, drawing on more than one source for data both within-method and across methods, is used to strengthen the authenticity of the study. It also serves to clarify meaning by identifying in different ways the phenomenon that is being seen (Flick, 2007). As well as between-method triangulation, I also tried to enhance 'in-method' robustness. I used the comments I made on each interview and career biography to group responses that were similar albeit expressed in different language (I used colour coding for this) as well as those that were unusual.⁹⁵ I also noted where the same question, for

⁹⁴ (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) caution that anonymity can also give the researcher license to interpret participant statements without being gainsaid, and that this must be guarded against.

⁹⁵ If the comment or response occurred more than thrice that indicated its seriousness or weight or commonality of sentiment and sometimes selected for quoting. For example the lack of time at IPD was something noted by practically all staff: however they differed in what they saw as its impact (see Chapter 7, section 713.4) and I quoted a perspectives where at least two of them held it. If there were qualifying or differing positions over an issue or alternative explanations of a

example on why certain committees no longer worked, elicited different responses and represented the multiplicity of views or opinions (see Chapter 8 section 8.21). Where possible I also sought to compare the views of two people in similar positions: I interviewed the current as well as previous Regional Education Director and the current as well as the previous District Directors of the districts I visited. I also checked data back with either key informants or with a person from the other organisation: if I was uncertain about what I was being told at IPD, I might check it with some key informant in AKF and vice versa as my journal entries attest:

'Glad I checked my information with Q. S/he had said that A had misled me which I had suspected. S/he also talked about how a head teacher had felt so empowered after an IPD seminar that Q had been able to pull back her/his budget from the Hukumat (government) and how now they were beginning to see a cadre of independent-thinking head teachers. I wondered why AKF had not taken up the government's idea of an internat and asked if s/he felt that the government would have moved head teachers to bring in a more dynamic one had AKF asked them to: s/he was not sure ' (excerpt from journal entries April- July 2004: see Appendix 5)

The issue of why AKF did not work with the existing boarding schools (internat) that served each district is discussed in Chapter 6 section 6.5. At the time this key informant was not a part of the process or the decision but in her/his current position, I could check whether the AKF were justified or not in their assessment made in their early days of engagement with the Badakhshan education system.

The use of multiple data-collection methods, including interviews, conversations,

phenomenon then the variations were reflected in the quotes. Sometimes, however, a quote was selected because of who the participant was. This is so, for example where a Regional Education Director offered a comment on how AKF worked when I was programme manager, or on how it worked now, from a standpoint of her/his perception and if the two views offered a similar critique that that would be quoted. (see Chapter 8 section 8.4). Sometimes a quote was selected because it offered a vision or a senior manager's understanding of a policy that others may not be aware of .the early exchanges over reform (chapter 6 section 6.5) are an example. I also quoted issues if the same sentiment was offered by two people on different sides of the organisational divide. So, for example, if one local AKF staff stated that they did not really want to be in the IPD to begin with, I quoted that when an IPD staff spontaneously also said s/he felt that the AKF staff did not want to be there.

document analysis and observations, helped me to cross-check, verify, support and supplement the data generated from one source of information through the others. It enabled me to provide a 'thick description'⁹⁶ to facilitate a richer understanding of the AKF-IPD encounter. Additionally, after the first field visit, I distilled my impressions into a series of points which I checked with the participants when I returned in 2006 to ensure that I had understood the situation correctly (see Appendix 7). As noted above, this yielded not just confirmation of data but fresh data as well.

Interviews were transcribed, usually overnight, and returned to the participants. Where a tape –recorder had not been used, I referred to both my own and my translator's notes. I also sought to clarify ideas during the interviews, as well as cross-checking what other participants had told me. The use of key informants, follow-up, informal conversations and verifications through email, helped to minimize the risk of misunderstandings or misinterpretations: information was checked and re-confirmed with the same and different participants. I ensured that I got data from a variety of people: those engaged with the AKF and the IPD, as well as those who were not. Where possible I did the same with documentation, ensuring that I examined a cross-section of evaluation reports, strategy documents, work plans to name a few. Ultimately, social research by its very nature cannot possibly be made entirely valid (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). The integrity of the research process is maintained by the researcher making every effort to maximize validity and reduce bias.

5.7.4 Generalisability

Case study methodology is often criticized for being weak with respect to generalisability. Some scholars (Denzin, 1989; Yin, 1994) hold that such a study should have a wide relevance and resonance beyond the uniqueness of the

⁹⁶ The term was first used by Clifford Geertz, (1973) to describe the way anthropologists collect and use their data.

case's context, relationships, location. Others, (Simons 1980; Stake 2000) argue that the value of a case may lie in its particularity: the interest in it arises from its very uniqueness, rendering generalisability less important.⁹⁷ In part, the problem lies with how generalisability has been conceptualized. As Lincoln and Guba attest, between the unique and the generalisable there lies 'the broad range of the related'. (Lincoln and Guba, 2000 p.38). They offer the notion of transferability between similar cases, or 'fittingness' through which a case might be generalized to another when the contexts of both cases are well known to the reader and the researcher (ibid p.40). This notion places on the researcher the responsibility of providing 'thick description' to facilitate such transferability of similarity between one unique case to another, from the 'sending' to the 'receiving' context (Lincoln and Guba, 2000 p 40). Pushing the idea further, Donmoyer (2000) suggests that difference, rather than similarity alone, between the cases may equally facilitate such transferability. (Donmoyer, 2000)

Stake (2000b) argues that readers come to a case with their own natural powers of experiencing and understanding as well as with their store of propositional and tacit knowledge. Hence we should look for 'naturalistic generalizations' that are

..epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience,
and hence to that person a natural basis for generalization
(Stake, 2000b).

or what he noted Hamilton calling 'inside the head' generalizations which a reader comes to, through acquiring concepts and information and steadily generalizing them to other situations as they learn more. Donmoyer, (2000) goes further and questions the appropriateness of generalizations in an applied field such as education, where there is a danger of using empirical generalizations to control action. He applies Piaget's schema of cognitive learning to the

⁹⁷ Stake (2000) identifies three types of case studies. a) *Intrinsic* case studies, where the interest lies primarily in understanding the case itself its uniqueness or unusualness: generalisation is of secondary importance. b) *Instrumental* case studies 'provide insight into an issue or redraw a generalisation'. The case is a means to an end: that of understanding some phenomena other than the case itself. c) In *collective* case studies several cases are studied together 'instrumentally' (Stake, 2000a). However, the distinctions between the three types of cases are often blurred and the categories not mutually exclusive. (Stake, 2000a).

internalization of generalisability from the writer to the reader's experience, and argues, that looked at in this way, diversity in case study research is an asset, expanding the base of knowledge and differentiation to draw from rather than being a liability (Donmoyer 2000 p.59-60). Schofield makes the crucial point that we need to ask what we are generalising to, and offers a distinction between generalising to three domains:

...to what is, to what may be and to what could be (Schofield, 2000 p 93)

The particularities of my case, faith – inspired development framed in post-Soviet transition, while giving the study its originality, pose a challenge to its capacity for generalization. However adopting Stake's position I argue that mine is an intrinsic case study. My purpose is not to represent the world but to explore the 'vitality, trauma and uniqueness of the case' (Stake 2000a).

Simons perhaps summarizes the issues between uniqueness and generalisability best when she maintains:

The tension between the study of the unique and the need to generalize is necessary to reveal both the unique and the universal and the unity of that understanding. To live with ambiguity, to challenge certainty, to creatively encounter, is to arrive, eventually, at seeing anew (Simons 1996: p 225, 237-38 cited in Bassey 1999, p.32).

Simons' caution against oversimplified dichotomies is important. While my case study is essentially intrinsic, some naturalistic generalizations may emerge from it about how educational change is effected when international and national institutions work together, in countries in transition, on change at the institutional level. The issue is not *whether* it is possible to generalize or not, but rather *how much*. It is an issue, I suggest, of balance.

5.8 Reflections during fieldwork

In defending a qualitative approach to my research I alluded to the emergent design of this study. My journal entries (see Appendix 5) attest to my continuous reflection on what I was finding and the very raw analysis that I already embarked on. The two incidents cited below demonstrate more vividly how my thinking evolved in response to my experience in the field.

5.8.1 Research as a political activity: agency

The first episode occurred during an introductory conversation with a head teacher as I set up the tape recorder. One simple question from him brought my research methodology into further focus:

Tell me. What would it take for me to do a PhD? (SOMDR).

I stopped in my tracks. I knew what lay behind the question. He had 27 years of experience in the education system and was as well qualified, as I was if not better, to speak to the issues I was raising. But it would be me who would write the thesis: he would have helped me to do it but could not help himself to do the same. What stood between him and a PhD was simply access: access to a particular language (English), to funding (although that could be overcome), and to an academic tradition that was different from his own. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the resultant state of transition and the effects of globalization had rendered his research tradition less valuable than mine. This was an issue of what was now considered legitimate, valued and superior knowledge. Raising the question at the beginning of the interview, he also quietly let me know that he was acutely aware of and questioning, even if tacitly, the dominant structures and practices. He was a social actor. He could choose to help or hinder my work through the interview, even if I alone could do this research.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ This illustrated for me as nothing else could, Foucault's conceptualisation of knowledge-power and the circulation of power as well as the individual's agency in using it.

I knew then that I needed to look at knowledge and network power and issues of agency in this enquiry. I also realized that the manner in which knowledge is acquired and used by researchers is both an ethical and a political issue. Issues of voice and access re-focused me to the fact that the very choice of research design can reflect an ethical stance with respect to how knowledge is acquired by researchers. There is a tension between local knowledge, which so often informs but does not constitute research and the researcher's knowledge, which so often is confined to academic discourses and disciplines but totally dependent on local knowledge to complement it and give it legitimacy, value and authenticity. (Bishop, 2005)

This insight significantly sharpened my awareness of the issues of the ownership of knowledge, with respect to both my research and the AKF –IPD encounter. These are taken up in Chapters 7 and 8. It also shaped the process of data collection, prompting me to return my distillation of the data to the participants, not merely for confirmation but for debate, as outlined below. Finally, it alerted me to where agency might be exercised in unequal relationships.

5.8.2 The power of relationships and relationships of power

During the data collection, I also noticed how the participants would sometimes tell me that something was confidential but then pause and as I put down my pen and say:

Well you can write it, I don't mind (AYWMZ).

Initially, in my naiveté, I interpreted this as a sign of friendship. Later I came to recognize it as an act of resistance as well. I realized that research is a political act for the participants too: they were using it as a tool to bring their issues to the fore in a different forum. I could not help but admire their ingenuity, and it alerted me to look more closely at the relationships of power and the power of relationships. This and the incident with the head teacher led me to the work of Foucault (1972; 1980) to understand some of the findings. The hegemonic discourses at the macro and micro level that are uncovered in the findings also

elicited counter-hegemonic discourses, and I turned to Gramsci to help make sense of these phenomena. I discuss salient aspects of both theorists' work in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 9 where I draw out their relevance to the findings more fully. With hindsight, the way that the participants dealt with the interview situation foreshadowed what I discovered with respect to the use of individual and collective agency.

5.8.3 A word on Discourse, hegemony, power and resistance

From its earlier (modernist) definition as a linguistic device that enabled expression of truth, discoveries, and made visible social structures the term discourses has now come to refer to:

....practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak...Discourses are not about objects, they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention' (Foucault 1977 p. 49).

Discourses are about

what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority (Ball, 2006).

Discourses then are language, text, policies and practices (Ball 2006). They are systems of thought composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs and practices:

that systematically construct the subjects and worlds of which they speak (Foucault 1972 p.49).

As noted in Chapter 3, discourses or, as Foucault terms them 'discursive practices', are linked to social processes of legitimation and power: they illuminate power relations particularly in relational settings such as schools and institutions (Grubium and Holstein 2000). Since discourses go beyond language devices to include social practices and that produce that which they speak of, they generate 'regimes of truth', advocating and sanctioning what can be articulated, what cannot and so what is normalised through sustained currency and what is silent. Through dictating what is spoken and who may speak it, discourses validate and nullify what is known and how it is known. In short

discourses elucidate the relational aspect of power, generated by who knows what and who has both the authority to speak as well as whose knowledge is legitimate. Foucault (1972; 1980) sees power as a neutral entity, universally present and important, not in its inherent characteristics but in how it is used relationally. He sees it as being within the reach of all individuals in their day-to-day lives, in the choice to exercise agency.

However, the notion of dominant discourses which drown out or marginalise other discourses that may exist remains. But, as Ball cautions, it is unwise to assume that 'subjugated knowledges' can be totally excluded from the picture since we live in a world of 'discordant, incoherent and contradictory discourses' (Ball 2006 p.49). Ball is speaking here of policy as discourse but his arguments hold good for this study as well as I will elaborate later.

Foucaudian exercise of the micro technologies of power were complemented by Gramscian notions of resistance and counter hegemonies that obtained in the IPD-AKF encounter. Hegemony, as discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3.4.2, operates through a consensual relationship between the hegemonic elements and the subaltern who acquiesce to it relinquishing to the dominant forces the right to speak for them. But the subaltern's participation in the hegemony generates their own 'organic intellectuals' who are increasingly able to discern and articulate the paradoxical nature of their own position within it to themselves. Hence hegemony can contain within itself the seeds of its own destruction since the subaltern's widening consciousness of their situation culminates in a challenge to the hegemony: except for two factors. One is the speed and flexibility - and hence sophistication - with which the hegemonic forces /discourses appropriate opportunity to maintain and perpetuate their superior economic and social status with which therefore they are able to disseminate its legitimacy. The second, arising from the first, is their ability to contain challenges, localise them and hence diffuse them. In the case of the AKF and IPD the 'weak chinks' in the hegemony began to appear when the relationship developed to that of a grantor-grantee (see Chapter 8 section 8.3.2). Other factors (the AKDN's policy of localisation for example) also conspired to facilitate a collective

challenge to the AKF and the counter hegemonic discourses discussed in Chapter 8 section 8.3.

5.8.4 An evolving methodology and thesis

The two episodes above, together with the frequency with which participants stated that they had no time to reflect on their practice, led me to review my data collection strategy. The critical incidences identified in Chapters 7 and 8 dominated the IPD staff's discourse and their attention. I had initially thought that the interviews and conversations themselves would be spaces for reflection, but the scope and speed of day-to-day changes, overtook - and left little or no room for - reflection. My field notes at the time state:

And it is the giving back their data to them in a succinct form during the next field visit as I have now designed it, that I feel will provide the right space and distance from the critical incidents to engage in fruitful reflection (file note June 2004))

As noted in Chapter 8 section 8.3 the changes witnessed in the next field visit gave as much cause for reflection to the participants as it did, me.

5.9 Data analysis process

Data analysis involves the processes of data grouping and reduction, cross checking and verification, data display and conclusion drawing. This occurred continuously during and after the fieldwork. Kvale and Brinkman's (2009) assertion that:

The analysis of an interview is interspersed between the initial story told by the interviewee to the researcher and the final story told by the researcher to an audience. (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009 p.193).

holds true for the entire process of analysis: I followed a whole series of steps before I told that 'final story'.

At the field – site I gave interview write-ups for checking to the participants and, as mentioned above, continued reflecting on them through my journal (see Appendix 5). After the first field visit, I transcribed all the interviews and went through the data again, to capture the salient points of what I had distilled from the interviews, documents, my observations and field notes. I noted particular emphases or recurring themes in the interviews and the life stories, as well as contradictions, as I re-read field notes or listened to the tapes and began the initial coding. This highlighting of common as well as unusual responses gave me a first level of analysis (see example at Appendix 4).

I returned my distilled interpretation (Appendix 6) to the participants in 2006, continuing the self-correcting which had begun with giving the interviews back. As already noted, that second visit yielded further, fresh data which I then also transcribed. I went through all the data twice manually, and noted (see Appendix 4) where accounts concurred and diverged as well as making initial comments that led to the identification of themes later on. I paid attention to who the participant was (old, young, an AKF or IPD staff, middle, senior manager, implementer or community member etc.) to identify particular perspectives or positions. I then went through the data once more, identified broad themes and grouped the data accordingly (see Appendix 7). I also reviewed the documentation and categorised it in chronological form and into broad categories. I re-visited my initial analysis to appraise it in the light of what I now found. Table 2 below captures the connection between the research questions, the tools and the processes of analysis. The questions in column 1 are derived from the main research questions which were:

'What does educational change mean in the context of the profound societal (political, ideological, economic and social) change in post – Soviet Tajikistan?'

And,

'What can be learnt about such change through exploring the transformation of an indigenous educational institution?'

They focus on the main changes in society and in education, how these and the AKDN as an intervening network was perceived, what organisational changes took place at the IPD at the RED and what tensions and opportunities were created, both at government level and at the level of the AKF-IPD interaction. And finally I looked at continuity and change.

| Questions arising from main research questions | Data collection tool(s) | Source | Data analysis processes |
|--|--|--|--|
| Main changes after the collapse of the FSU on society in general and education in particular | conversations, career histories, focus groups** | community members, AKF/IPD/AKDN staff parent committees, teachers and head teachers (the non IPD/AKF perspective) | Discourse analysis* , linking to transition frameworks, parallels in the past on imposed change (Chs.2,4, 6,9) |
| Perception of educational change | Interviews, conversations Focus groups** | IPD staff, AKF staff, head teachers, RED staff, teachers, parents | Discourse analysis, policy analysis, distillation of initial findings in 2004 (App.7). Grounded theory approach to fresh data (Ch. 8) Foucault and Gramsci) |
| Organisational change: (governance, structures, policies and practices) | Interviews, field notes conversations observations, Documentation | IPD staff, AKF staff IPD, AKF, Govt docs | |
| Impressions of AKDN and interventions | Interviews, conversations, career histories, observation | IPD staff, AKF staff, community members (non AKDN perspective) | Discourse analysis (faith/development: changing perceptions of both) |
| Tensions, opportunities (arising from above changes) | Interviews, conversations observations, field notes | IPD staff, AKF staff | Discourse analysis, the old and the new (Venda, Birzea) uncovering multiple strategies of resistance*** to hegemonies, and negotiation and empowerment: Foucault, Gramsci, |
| Continuity and change | observation, conversations documentation, (tracking changes) | IPD staff, AKF staff, community members IPD, AKF documents | Discourse analysis, policy analysis, a look back at patterns from Soviet and pre-Soviet times (Ch. 9) |

Table 2: Questions, Data analysis tools and processes

* Discourse analysis was applied to interviews, conversations and career biographies throughout the study. With respect to faith and development, for example, first one then the other was uppermost although both were present throughout.

**The focus groups did not work well as noted earlier: conversations and career life stories were used more extensively instead.

*** Resistance was apparent already in the first field visit. (see section 5.8 for my early awareness in the field about knowledge/power and resistance). Foucault was useful here in uncovering both power relationships and forms of individual resistance. In 2006 when the AKF CEO position was localised (see Chapter 8) a more collective form of counter hegemony closer to Gramsci's analysis was visible (see Chapter 8).

I began by drawing on a typology of change that I had worked on prior to my field visits. It had enabled me to look at the categories of change that I thought might find in the field. This included imposed change, invited change, change as reform, progressive or regressive change, continuity and change, profound or superficial, policy and practice/behavioural change, direct or Indirect change, cultural changes, (in values perhaps). I also considered change in different arenas: political, social, economic, educational, cultural as well as change at different levels: physical, policy, systemic, practice/action, structural. Trying to group the data in this range of types of changes was overwhelming. I felt as if I had shredded the data: the meaning or coherence seemed elusive. I finally managed to create four broad groupings: the context of change (whether it was imposed or invited), the perception of change (was it thought good, well managed, badly managed, regressive), the response to change (was it resisted, welcomed, resented, effected) and finally, change events. These included, for example, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the civil war, the arrival of the AKDN, the localisation of the AKF CEO position among others that shaped the AKF-IPD interaction. The responses to change themselves changed as was the case with how the AKDN was viewed initially and later on (See chapters 7 and 9).

Appendix 7 illustrates how I could map the responses to changes by institution by level of change (regional, local or national) and by whether they were imposed or evolved from within. The research questions, (what educational change meant in this particular post-Soviet context given the AKF-IPD relationship and what might

be learnt about such changes from this institutional change) guided the interview questions and the career biographies. The discourse analysis of the responses led to the identification of themes (for example 'resistance'). Further, analysis yielded both, the various types of resistance (individual, overt, covert, by commission or omission) as well as the issues of power (Foucault) and hegemony (Gramsci) which allowed deeper interpretation of the actions or non-actions of the AKF and IPD staff. Documentation and observations facilitated policy analysis that revealed where the decision-making lay, what the limits of IPD's autonomy both from the government and from AKF were, among other insights. Reflection through journal entries and later through writing, re-arranging sections and chapters also helped to fine-tune the analysis.

In the writing up, I struggled with trying to represent simultaneous changes sequentially or thematically. I re-arranged and re-aligned certain sections a number of times, and the re-working yielded greater insight (through further reflection and re-reading of the data and my draft text) on issues of continuity and change which helped me to link the data back to the earlier chapters (2, 3 and 4) of the thesis. There were three key informants whom I regularly corresponded with, to clarify, verify issues or ask questions that arose as I was writing up the thesis. The process of writing up also helped in distancing me from the immediacy of the issues and people I was connected with.⁹⁹

The encounter of AKF and IPD is framed in a variety of discourses: of FSU transition, of development, of faith (and hence culture) and of institutional transformation. These are the subject of chapters 2-4 and provide not just background information but a contextualisation for the findings, highlighting continuities, strategies for responding to changes, and deeper, core community worldviews which underpinned their experience of and action in relation to educational change through institutional development. I did not focus on issues

⁹⁹ It was this distance that helped me recognise participants' sharing of certain information as an act of resistance for example, or that apparent deference to expertise or authority was sometimes also a strategy of expedience and did not always signify agreement or concurrence in thinking. Even a level of what might seem like oversight, for example, letting the committees set up under the charter fall into disuse, was also a strategy of avoidance.

of faith and of culture directly: my main interest was not to describe faith and culture but to see how they influenced development perspectives, initiatives and practices. I found that these were threads that ran through the entire process of institutional transformation, sometimes overtly and more often covertly, leading me in the end to the emergent concept of deep alignment discussed in Chapter 9.

As noted above, issues of whose knowledge counted and how networks (institutional and informal, based on cultural and ideological practices) were used, surfaced early in the field work. The notions of discourse and power became important, and I drew on the work of Foucault (1972; 1980) to help make sense of the relationship between knowledge and power. I also discovered that understanding how structure and agency (Archer, 2003; Dolfsma and Verburg 2005) operated was important in analyzing the encounter of the 'old' with the 'new' (Birzea 1994; Venda, 1991) as were issues of resistance and the appropriation of knowledge. Here, I found the work of Gramsci particularly useful in understanding some of the collective responses to hegemony and change within the IPD-AKF encounter.

As I have examined these discourses to interpret the data, other concepts and issues have surfaced: one of these was the recasting of development to take account of what I have termed 'deep alignment' between the development agencies and the community. That is discussed in Chapter 9 as an 'emergent' concept, although the term is used with reservations. Concepts are 'emergent' for the researcher: for those who 'live' them already, they are all too familiar¹⁰⁰ Part Two of this study focuses on the data and its interpretation.

5.10 Conclusion

The issue of context continues to loom large in this study. The physical and

¹⁰⁰ An analogy would be the statement that 'Columbus discovered America', which the Aborigines object to because they always knew it was there although they may not have called it 'America'.

cultural context influenced not just what data was collected, but also how conventional data collection tools and processes were adapted and used or discarded. I had to take particular note of the venue for interviews for example, resort to having them at my home to ensure a more relaxed atmosphere free of concerns about being overheard or identified but then bringing in the element of hospitality that is not commonly a part of interview technique. I abandoned focus groups with teachers and parents altogether despite two attempts at conducting them. I used conversations (including discussions with my translator) to get the sense of community perspectives that I had hoped to gain from the focus groups. I also quickly realised that what data I collected was influenced by my own position as former programme manager, and current researcher and friend. In that sense, I had to account for myself as well, as part of the context.

I have advocated and defended an illuminative and qualitative case study design. The methodology for this particular study has been responsive to the human, cultural, ideological and geographical context in which the research was conducted. It was also responsive to changing and changed circumstances as the study was taking place, which resulted in fresh data being obtained in 2006, and a changed perspective on how development can be shaped under certain circumstances (See Chapter 8). My own reflexivity was sharpened by the interaction with participants and led to a deeper engagement with and analysis of the data. The next three chapters describe what I found in the field.

Chapter 6: Educational Change in Gorno Badakhshan: Initial encounters

6.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the initial encounter of the Badakhshani community with the AKDN agencies in the aftermath of the civil war. It describes the response to re-connection with their spiritual leader at a time of crisis and to the 'modern' manifestation of his help through the AKDN. It goes on to examine the complexity of this encounter in terms of ideology, faith and cultural perspectives, and delineates how these translated into issues on the ground over how to effect educational change.

6.2 First encounters

Although informal contact with the Aga Khan was made by the Badakhshani community leaders as early as 1991 the AKDN's first mission team reached Badakhshan in 1993 (Aga Khan Foundation, 1993) While the worst of the fighting was over, the situation was still very volatile. The AKF¹⁰¹ was the first international agency to go to the region: the rest of the international community considered it too dangerous to maintain a presence there.

6.3 (Dis) continuities, social confusion and social cohesion

The collapse of the Soviet Union was the first momentous change, or rather

¹⁰¹ The AKF was the first of the AKDN agencies to be formed in 1967 with a remit to promote '... creative and effective solutions to selected problems that impede social development in the low income countries of Asia and Africa..... (which) encourage initiatives in health, education and rural development that have the potential to help large numbers of people in the developing world.' (AKF 1995.7)

discontinuity, that the Badakhshanis experienced. And as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4, it was transformative. However, I would argue that the single, defining event that has shaped the Badakhshanis' notion of change and of their identity, was the civil war, bringing to the fore as it did, ethnic and clan divisions that threatened the very fabric of the Tajik nation. Civil war in Tajik is termed 'brother killing', the term reflecting the extent of the violation felt by a hitherto relatively cohesive society.

As noted in Chapter 4 section 4.4, the Badakhshanis, sided with the opposition in the civil war. They were also not represented at the peace talks. This meant that they were not only targeted during the fighting but also isolated immediately after it.¹⁰² The influx of internally displaced people into the region put severe pressure on resources including food, heating and housing. As noted earlier, Badakhshan traditionally only produced 15% of its own food needs. The rest was normally airlifted into the region from Dushanbe.¹⁰³ During the civil war and a couple of years afterwards, the Khorog-Dushanbe road remained closed and the airlifting had ceased. The only other road out of Badakhshan was to the Kyrgyz town of Osh whence some supplies were brought in. However, at the height of the civil war, Tajikistan's neighbours closed their borders to keep the troubles from spilling over into their countries. In some areas of Badakhshan, the population was close to starvation.

Memories of the civil war still run raw and deep and it is only a decade later that people spoke about it more readily. Data on this phase of the study comes from interviews and life stories, but also from reminiscences embedded in other conversations and never dwelt on for long:

My teeth had gone soft with not eating anything solid for so long
(LAMYAD).

¹⁰² The Badakhshanis were not the only community thus targeted: all those who sided with the opposition were similarly dealt with (Anderson 1997).

¹⁰³ In Soviet times, 11 planes a day came into the regional capital, Khorog, with supplies of all that the community needed. (LAMYAD).

A boy came begging: my son just gave him the non (a round bread: a Tajik staple). We only had two nons¹⁰⁴ ourselves with all of us. We watched him walk away....he did not even say 'thank you' (laughs), he was so little (OWCM).

I got some oil and other things like soap to sell from outside ... from our connections. But I could not sell them. I just divided them amongst the neighbours. I divided it all. I could not eat and see them not eat. I'll never be a good business woman. (Laughs) I could not do it (OWCM).

The data suggests a strong sense of communal solidarity that had its roots not only in the communist emphasis of the Soviet collective – which, in fact, had capitalised on that pre-existing community cohesion (Iloliev 2008) - but also in the traditional cultural and religious values of the community. These narratives throw into sharper relief the subsequent changes in values that the community observed.¹⁰⁵ They also signal a continuity of values and action. They put a different perspective on what is often seen as nepotism, conflicts of interests or a lack of professionalism in the work arena. As Hyden (2003) attests in speaking of Africa, clan obligations form the basis of the informal institutional networks: hence transactions such as economic transactions that are seen as impersonal in the West are, in fact, socially derived. Finding a job for someone from one's family or clan¹⁰⁶, falls into that category of social relationships that elicit strong or perhaps stronger accountability than do conceptual constructs of transparency.

The isolation also generated a deep sense of abandonment. The state was

¹⁰⁴ Bread and salt have traditionally been symbols of hospitality and are offered to important visitors as they arrive in the province. But during the civil war bread acquired added significance where it came to be the only food that people has to eat. Now in Badakhshan, people will not throw bread away and will eat it even when it had become hard. It will only be thrown away with much expression of regret, if it has fungus growing on it. A bag containing bread is never put on the ground and bread is never cut with a knife: always by hand, for sharing. (personal communication and observation, 1998-2002).

¹⁰⁵ In speaking of change, several participants noted positive and negative shifts in community values in relation to individualism being on the rise, reduced reliance on the state and more self – reliance for example (OMS DP; YWTBBN; OMS DR; YMAAD).

¹⁰⁶ In Central Asia, families and extended families are linked together by larger kinship structures or clans based on real or putative blood ties and stressing the affective sentiments of loyalty and obligation and reciprocity. Clans are the source of one's identity whereas 'nations are relatively constructs superimposed on the much more important and fundamental clans' (Gleason 1997, p. 46).

unable to meet its statutory responsibilities to its citizens: salaries, social services, even the daily supply flights had all been stopped (personal communications, 1998)¹⁰⁷. The old ideological morality had disappeared, leaving in its wake not just a vacuum but violence of the worst kind: a social and moral dislocation that the community struggled to come to terms with¹⁰⁸. (Birzea 1994: Mitter, 2003) If the social obligations that had bound state and citizen (Birzea, 1994, Knoucky 1996) had been broken with the collapse of the Soviet Union, then the civil war had put an end to any sense of the rule of law being intact. The resultant state of anomie (Birzea 1994) was intensified by it. In extreme cases, individuals were unable to cope with the trauma and it claimed lives¹⁰⁹. At the group level, the response to the crisis expressed itself in strengthened cohesion. The communality came to the fore but not without a devastating loss of hope (AYMAD; AYMPMZ).

Education was still prioritised. Children went to school even during the civil war, and teachers continued to teach:

Partly it was because it was better to do something than to sit at home. And you know, I found that I was giving more time to the children during that time, than during the Soviet time. In the Soviet time, I just met my quota. The children also seemed to prefer to stay at school. Perhaps being there helped them to forget what it was like at home. Even if I was sick they came home saying 'Malima, (teacher) why are you not at school today?' So I felt I could not disappoint them (IYWPMBN).

Even when I arrived in Badakhshan in 1998, the conditions were harsh. Schools had to close in December because they could not be heated, and often resumed as late as March. Even then, students' fingers turned blue from the cold, and

¹⁰⁷ Data given to me when I took over as education programme manager and held meetings with school teachers and school heads in the districts to understand the scope of my work and their needs.

¹⁰⁸ I was told of how one person's life was saved only because his name had been mis-spelt, so that he could claim he was not a Badakhshani when the militia held him at knife point in the streets of Dushanbe. Another spoke of how their home was burnt in Dushanbe and how, by sheer luck they were not there. The randomness of the violence accords with accounts of the civil war (EOMHPR; AYMAD).

¹⁰⁹ Anecdotal evidence suggests a marked increase in suicides in this period, particularly amongst men who felt helpless in the face of their children's hunger (personal communication, 2004).

they were constantly coughing. Blackboards could no longer be written upon, broken windows could not be mended and there were no textbooks or other resources, to work with. Teachers taught science with no laboratory equipment and even the very meagre salaries were often paid up to five months in arrears.¹¹⁰ During the civil war, the situation was bleaker.

At the onset of the crisis, the young and the mobile set about adjusting to a changed world and the global reality they found themselves in. The following testimonies illustrate the speed with which they switched courses and careers to cope with the demands of transition and globalisation.

'I was in the army (in Moscow) and training to be a pilot. But when I came out of the army everything was chaos. The Russians said that we had to find our own way and money to get home. I was a soldier. They had brought me here but now they did not pay my salary or my way home. I did not have any money. Then with the help of friends I finally got some money and came back (to Badakhshan). And then I went again to Moscow. I told my parents they should not worry about me, I would manage. At least if I was out it was one less person to feed. I found myself a job at night and I studied English in the day' (AYMAD).

My speciality was German but then I did English (AYWEMN).

I started my engineering course (in Dushanbe) and in three months the civil war came. We were told to go home (Badakhshan) and come back in February 1993. We thought it would be few months but it was clear in January 1993 that we could not return. I sat at home for a whole year and could do nothing. Then I could join the University of Khorog's English course. But I hoped to go back to engineering (AYMPMZ).

Concern for the safety of families drew those who were abroad back home. But the civil war curtailed movement and options. There were no jobs in Khorog, and

¹¹⁰ These conditions continue to operate in much of the region even today. Despite the drain of qualified teachers from the system, student attendance, as I have observed, has continued to remain relatively stable.

until 1992, no university. The enforced inertia took its toll even on the young and more robust.

I was depressed! I was at home for the whole year and could do nothing. I could not go to Dushanbe to study again and no work in Khorog' (AYMPMZ)¹¹¹

It was so hard. It was cold. We had no electricity, nothing to eat, nothing to do. It was hard to wake up in the morning to force yourself to get dressed. Every day I went to see if there was any work.....you can ask H (when s/he was finally interviewed for a job) I was gripping my chair like this from stress. N gave me water and tried to make me relax but I just sat like this (indicates sitting rigidly upright on the edge of the seat, arms gripping the sides) (AYMAD)

The literature speaks to the sense of near-paralysis that the collapse of the Soviet Union elicited from the people of each country (Birzea 1994; Mitter 2003; Polytzoi et al 2003). The accounts above indicate that in Tajikistan the civil war both exacerbated the trauma of that period of anomie and restricted the room for manoeuvre afforded the Badakhshanis. The 'inaction' of the population was due, in part at least, not to the lack of will but sheer absence of options at that time. The priority was to survive both the hunger and the threat of bombing (YMAD). However, the pursuit of relevant education and skills was already evident. The academic community began to review the situation of the many students suddenly unable to continue studying at the state university in Dushanbe:

We had meetings you know about how to go ahead now with the University of Khorog.¹¹² What to do about all these students from Dushanbe (MYMCDK).

What was 'done' was that the university of Khorog was established. With AKF's help English and IT courses led by expatriates were also introduced. These were

¹¹² The Khorog State University KSU was established at this time (1992) to ensure that tertiary students could begin or continue their studies in the region till it was safe to return to Dushanbe but is now an established part of the Badakhshan education system.

the specialisations most in demand by students, in line with emerging market needs generated, in part, by the presence of AKDN (see section 6.4 2) itself.

For the Badakhshanis education had always been a priority, partly because their faith emphasised its intrinsic value and partly because, as already noted in the last chapter, their inhospitable environment left them limited scope for alternative avenues to income generation. The guidance of the Aga Khan and the presence of the AKDN reinforced its importance, if only to secure jobs within the institution. It also prioritised the knowledge of the English and Information Technology, skills which young graduates possessed the over more experienced professionals who understood the education system better, as section 6.5 below and Chapter 7 section 7.2.2.4 indicate, this created its own set of tensions in the community.

6.4 New presences in an isolated region

The extent of communal despair touched on in the previous section is evident in the language in which the AKF's¹¹³ arrival was remembered.

Everything changed. We now had hope. We could think about a future (AYMPMZ).

We felt there was someone who would look after us, someone of our own (MYMCDK).

We felt that we were not alone and abandoned any more. There was someone for us. We would not die (IYWSNF).

The use of the collective 'we' in speaking of this arrival is significant: until that point the interview register was the first person singular 'I' or 'my family', but in

¹¹³ The AKF was the first of the AKDN agencies to work in Badakhshan. The mandate to deliver humanitarian assistance was a first for the institution which is a development agency normally working in the health, education and rural development sectors. The other AKDN agencies overseeing entrepreneurship, the education and health service provision (with a private service delivery mandate) came later, once the political situation was more stable and the food crisis was abating.

response to 'how did you feel when the AKDN first arrived here?' the register was always a collective one.

This re-introduction to the Imam had been carefully orchestrated.

My father had talked to us about the Imam. We knew we had an Imam. We used to read Mawlana¹¹⁴ Sultan Mohammad Shah's Farmans.¹¹⁵ But it was the three people: (names them) who told us about the Imam when they came. They went to each village and told us.¹¹⁶ They brought photographs (AYWSNZ).

One of those three who brought the news of the Imam and his promise of help through his network of institutions to the beleaguered Badakhshanis recalled the intensity of the experience and the deep sense of spirituality they witnessed in this community:

We opened the door for them to the outer world. We told them about the Imam. We talked about the institutions of the AKDN and how these would help them. I don't think they really understood what it meant institutionally. It was too much. But they came in their thousands. We organised the meetings in every village through the Khalifas. They looked at us with such reverence! Because we had come from the Imam, you see? You had to be careful not to get carried away by it all (EOMRK).¹¹⁷

In the midst of so many discontinuities, a deeper continuity resurfaced in the re-connection with the Imam's presence. Faith had been enshrined in the safety of

¹¹⁴ This is a title by which the Imam is addressed. Here the reference is to the present Aga Khan's grandfather, the previous Imam.

¹¹⁵ The guidance that the Imam gives to the community of followers is universally referred to as 'firman' or 'farman'.

¹¹⁶ Members of the AKDN who could speak Farsi were sent ahead to talk to the people, village by village, through the traditional religious leaders about the Imam and the AKDN. (EOMHPR; AYMAD). Simultaneously, needs assessment teams went out to assess the humanitarian needs as well as development potential (EOMRAF, AKF mission reports 1993).

¹¹⁷ As it became possible to penetrate more deeply physically into Afghan Badakhshan which was not held by the Taleban, the AKDN expatriate staff recounted similar experiences of reverence for anyone who came from or worked with or was close to the Imam and his institutions. For a short time, as I observed, such reverence was also accorded, to a lesser degree to the AKDN expatriate staff.

oral transmission¹¹⁸ although not all rituals had had to be abandoned under communism.¹¹⁹ The office of Khalifa had been preserved through heredity, and had continued to function, albeit discreetly. These oral traditions were now made more concrete through re-acquaintance with the person of the Imam (as spiritual leader) and the presence of his development institutions on the ground. The principle of Imamatus had been preserved by the community, but they were unprepared for its modern manifestation and the link with material progress.

When I first saw pictures of the Imam I was totally surprised. Our Imam wore a Western suit! He was not dressed in a long white robe with a beard. We had all been studying the Quran you know (laughs).¹²⁰ And then he comes and talks of education! I was so proud (MYMCDK).

The two presences, the Imam and his institutions, served to validate long-held religious beliefs, restored to the community a sense of security and of pride¹²¹ and also emphasised their identity (as Shia Muslims) in relation to their Sunni Muslim fellow citizens:

It made us different in the eyes of the other communities. They knew now that it was not just words. That we did have a spiritual leader. And he looked after all of us, them too (AOMCYF).¹²²

Finally the Aga Khan, through his guidance, and the AKDN, through its programmes, offered a renewed sense of purpose and action. Learning English, for example, was now not simply a matter of market acuity but was also necessary because:

¹¹⁸ Most respondents spoke of seeing their grandparents pray and their fathers reading certain treasured books as their sole indication of the faith in their childhood. It was during their mid to late teens that they were told about the Imam and exposed to the religious aspects of their lives. (LAYWDHN, LAYWN, LIYWDHA)

¹¹⁹ Rituals relating to birth and death continued to be observed (LAYWN), and sacred sites and springs continued to be frequented and maintained (LAYWNAJ).

¹²⁰ They expected him to quiz them on their knowledge of the Quran so they tried to 'learn' it.

¹²¹ Learning English, for example, was now not simply a matter of market acuity but also because the Imam spoke it and emphasised its importance for their progress (SOMRUS)

¹²² This is a reference to the fact that the inhabitants of two of the eight districts of Badakhshan are Sunni Muslims.

The Imam's guidance is in English and he emphasises its importance for our progress. We should know it (YMCM).

In his explanation of the processes of transition Birzea (see Chapter 3 section 3.2.2) elaborates the sense of what he calls 'krisis', which denotes the disintegration of the norm but also holds within itself the possibility of a renewal, marking a turning point in which there is a re-forging of the existing reality and a collective will to seek:

...new certainties, new psychological references, new social codes, new sources of legitimacy (Birzea 1994, p. 18).

Such a renewal was certainly generated by the arrival of the Imam and the AKDN (AYWNAF; YWSJAM) which ushered in a new expression of a traditional identity as Ismailis. As I discuss later (Chapter 9 section 9.5.3) it symbolised the bridge (Venda 1991) that helped to fuse the old with the new. The AKDN's presence also concretised the global transition to capitalism at the local level. Its programmes included rural development projects, food security, micro finance and income generation initiatives among others.¹²³ It became the catalyst for change, and, as the next section demonstrates, for purposeful action as well as contestation.

6.4.1 Clashing expectations: religious and ideological distances

The Aga Khan envisaged development in Tajikistan in terms of an encounter of the Western, Muslim and Communist worlds (rather than simply a transition from communism to capitalism although that is undoubtedly a part of the encounter. Focusing on the strengths of each culture, he notes:

.... what it would take for this, or any, encounter to be constructive. I suggest that there are four pre-requisite for

¹²³ In the time I was there the AKDN expanded its activities from AKF's health, education and rural development programmes to include disaster preparedness and micro enterprise and tourism through three of its other agencies. The work has continued to expand as I note each time I visit Tajikistan.

success. For each of the cultures, (the West, Islam and Communism) the result should, first, draw on its strength and second, be consistent with its goals. Third, the result should be a sustainable improvement in the current situation. And fourth, the transition should be humane....

He goes on to identify the strengths as:

....a recognition of fundamental human rights (in the West). The Muslim world offers deep roots in a system of values, emphasising service, charity and a sense of common responsibility and denying what it sees to be the false dichotomy between religious and secular lives. The ex-Communist world, although it failed economically, made important investments in social welfare, with particular emphasis on the status of women, and was able to achieve in Tajikistan impressive social cohesion. These are a powerful array of strengths and goals. Just how to combine them to solve Tajikistan's problems, is not clear. But if the outcome is to be sustainable, it seems necessary to concentrate resources on the development of private institutions, of accountable public institutions and of human potential ((Aga Khan IV, 1994)

AKF's first challenge was how to make the transition from its relief programmes¹²⁴ (it had delivered humanitarian aid since 1994) to the establishment of a viable development agenda. The breadth of AKF's mandate (health, education and rural development) meant that its programmes touched almost every aspect of people's lives, much as socialism had done in the recent past. The loyalty to and the expectations of a centralised government were therefore transferred to the AKDN (personal communications 1998-2004).¹²⁵ This was AKF's first major

¹²⁴ Humanitarian assistance was initially intended to supplement government supplies, the 50% increase in Badakhshan population due to internal displacement in 1992 and the difficulty of getting supplies from Dushanbe, either because of severe weather conditions and bad roads, or a stepping up of the civil war or government neglect or a combination of all of these, the entire population of the province was dependent on AKF for humanitarian assistance (AKF: 1997. 1 cited in Keshavjee 1998).

¹²⁵ People I encountered would comment on how the government was doing nothing and AKDN was sustaining them. When a young leader in the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP) was invited to stand for election, his response was, 'but what will I do there? I can do much more from here (within AKF)' (LYMYOD).

humanitarian operation,¹²⁶ and it was in danger of perpetuating the culture of dependency that the Soviet system had fostered.¹²⁷

The Foundation had a short window of opportunity before donor fatigue set in. Relief work was therefore underpinned by development objectives to ensure sustainability. In 1998, following a couple of years of cash injection into the economy, humanitarian assistance was targeted using set criteria such as earning capacity, with a safety net operating for the very poor.¹²⁸ The community was at first confused and angry.¹²⁹ This ran counter to both their expectations of an Imamati institution, albeit a development and not a communal one, as well as their ideological understanding of what a social contract with a 'state-like' institution implied (Birzea 1994). The exigencies of donor funding, globalisation forces, the market economy and the need for communities to be self-sustaining had not yet registered with the Badakhshanis. Even as late as 1998, the community's concept of taking charge of their own lives was still operational at the personal rather than the systemic level, and transition was still seen as a temporary state of affairs that would one day come to an end¹³⁰ (YMACYF; YWAPU; YWAROB). Besides, by then savings had been wiped out and services such as electricity, medicines, textbooks,¹³¹ attracted user fees.¹³² The

¹²⁶ AKF had 'shot itself in the foot' in starting with humanitarian assistance in that to shift away from it was difficult. Had another AKDN agency handled that then AKF could have come in with development initiatives and the population might have seen that as a progression rather than a 'back tracking'. However at that time there was no other AKDN agency that could have taken that mandate (EAYMNAJ).

¹²⁷ After the Tajik experience, a new agency, Focus, was added to the AKDN network to cover humanitarian aid and disaster preparedness.

¹²⁸ One of the respondents related how in many villages those targeted chose to continue to pool what they received, despite the fact that receiving humanitarian assistance was an indication of their level of need and poverty. Their argument was that it was their neighbours, not the MSDSP (the local NGO created by AKF responsible for the rural development aspect of its work) who looked after them in the winter when fuel was short and they needed help (MYMDMDY).

¹²⁹ The general manager of MSDSP, a local Badakhshani, had a constant stream of deputations and even threats at the time when the humanitarian assistance was being cut back.

¹³⁰ When I arrived in late 1998 and asked how they would like to see education in the future, local AKF staff would invariably say 'for things to be as they were, for a return to the Soviet days'.

¹³¹ AKF operated a rental textbook programme because students could not afford to buy them (AKF Project Overview 1998).

¹³² The people in my building had tinkered with the wires so that I was paying for everyone's electricity. The sum was small I was glad to do my bit for the community but for a local person without employment it would have been impossible to stay warm in the winter. The irony was it

government had been unable to pay salaries and teachers had worked from 1995 – 1998 with almost no remuneration. Many stated that they stayed in the posts 'because the Imam told us not to stop teaching' (personal communications; Niyozov 2001). Even when salaries were paid, they were often five months in arrears and did not amount to the price of a sack of flour. It was an extremely difficult transition.¹³³

Keshavjee (1998) suggests that for the Badakhshanis the arrival of the Imam and the work of his institutions was like manna from heaven, with all the religious implications of the phrase (p 69).¹³⁴ The words 'this is the Imam's institution' were often quoted as an affirmation of integrity. Yet as the AKDN set about its work, there were tensions too in relation to how the organisation was staffed and run as well as the selectivity of its programmes.

6.4.2 Cultural and ideological encounters – and (mis)understandings

The AKDN's very presence, as I had observed when I was employed in Badakhshan (1998-2002), inevitably increased inequities. While they worked, expatriates needed houses and home-helps to manage them. Those who could provide such services saw their economic situations improve dramatically. English and IT skills were in demand and although this created much-needed employment, enormous income disparities were also introduced in an essentially egalitarian community. Norms such as parents being the breadwinners were

was the meter reader and collector who actually told me what was going on. Also local friends stopped going to the doctor and began treating themselves with herbal medicine to save money.

¹³³ A major problem for the AKF programme was that teachers were leaving their posts to work in the bazaar (market), where they made a little more money to maintain their families. Such decisions were not lightly taken, however, as Niyozov's study (Niyozov 2001) shows, where one of his respondents struggled with the decision to leave teaching to do trading for more money.

¹³⁴ And I too had witnessed the reverence with which some Badakhshanis invested the building in which the Aga Khan had stayed and which served AKF as an office at other times. Each Navroz (New Year) an older member of the community insisted on baking a cake for all AKDN staff.

In response to my apology to a head teacher for the fact that I had asked him to come and see me instead of vice versa (I was office-bound awaiting an international call) he expressed surprise, saying it was a privilege for him to for him to enter the building. (OMSHTS).

suddenly disrupted, as highly-placed officials like the Regional Education Director now commanded 5% of what their English-speaking university graduate children could earn. Hence, social differentiation based on participation in a capitalist economy began to emerge in an essentially egalitarian community. But the ideological gap did not end there. The issue of faith crept into the picture inadvertently.

In an effort to alleviate the extreme hardship which it encountered, particularly in relation to food security, the AKDN had to rapidly set up the requisite organisations and programmes to deal with the crisis. It therefore turned to those local people who commanded sufficient kudos in the informal institution system (Hyden 2008) and had the flexibility and creativity to adapt to the new situation to organise the paperwork and the passage of truckloads of food and supplies. In short, the former members of the Communist Party and its youth wing, the Komsomol. But while the AKDN saw local leaders, the community saw the perpetuation of elitist privilege. Those who had promoted communism, and hence atheism, were now suddenly also in the forefront in an institution associated in the minds of the Badakhshanis with their faith. And this created confusion in the community, since the Imam – and by extension his institutions - stood for justice (Keshavjee1998).

Equally difficult to fathom for the community, and even for the same privileged elite who had re-invented themselves so successfully, was the direction of some AKF programmes, the privatisation of land and the setting up of the first private school in Khorog being two of them. Both were in conflict with the then prevailing ideology.

What they were asking us to do seemed to me completely undoable. How could you privatise land? I did not understand. But then, nothing else was moving. The government was not doing anything, so I thought “Why not?” But I did not believe it would work (AOMCYF).

Clearly, acting on the AKDN initiatives was not always a matter of loyalty to the Imam, but a pragmatic response, signalling not so much a readiness for a

specific change as the rejection of inertia. Anything seemed better than no action. But the ideological shift was not easy. The same participant observed:

At first I did not want to leave government. I did not know much about the Imam. I thought this AKF was some little NGO that Z was involved with ... It split the community when I decided to join. Half of them said "if he does it, it must be something good. We should follow him. He knows what he is doing". The other half said, "He's betrayed everything we stand for." (in moving from the government to the new, private institution called AKF) (AOMCYF).

The struggle with clashing ideologies is evident, as is the recognition of the need to adjust to changed circumstances. But what is also significant is the import of the actions of someone who clearly was perceived as a leader in the community. Chapter 3, section 3.3.4 examines the definition of institutions as 'rules of the game' framed in the social rather than merely the economic paradigm and the importance of this to an understanding of change in communities, As Hyden (2008) posits:

While no society, especially today, is immune to outside influences, any borrowed values and norms that are reflected in particular institutions become meaningful and legitimate only once they have been domesticated and acted upon by key groups (Hyden 2008 p. 2).

The testimony of this respondent reveals the processes by which such informal institutions in this case the young communist leadership, change and evolve at need.

The communist elite's dexterity at re-inventing themselves and their flexibility and creativity in adapting to the new situation demonstrates their capacity to deal with radical change. It also enabled the AKDN to implement potentially contentious programmes such as land privatisation, using recognised local leaders, structures and procedures. This capacity to adapt is explored more fully in the chapters that follow, but it is important to note its presence in the transition process from the outset.

The setting up of the first independent school in Khorog created similar confusion. The issues there ranged from whether it was legal to take over a government school, whether licences required central government or regional government approval. Indeed it was unclear whether the region could 'gift' land to the school in the first place or whether that was in the purview of the national government alone. There was no precedent for such a move and the extent and limits of regional powers had never been tested. The AKDN also complicated issues by taking over an existing school rather than building one from scratch. At the communal level, however, the issues were entirely different:

We expected the parents to resist the payment of fees. But, surprisingly, that was not at issue. The fees were fine. But they could not understand why their children, who lived in the neighbourhood of the school, could not go to it. It was their school: how could they be refused entry and other children from other neighbourhoods taken? They were prepared to pay the fees but the idea of entry on the basis of merit or assessment they did not agree with (EYWLSH).

That the Badakhshanis were already coming to terms with capitalism is clear. User –fees were accepted: the economics of the Soviet system no longer existed, and everything had to be paid for. The ideological gap was harder to close in an egalitarian system with universal education. Here, there was not just the clash of ideologies but the paradox of the AKDN, seen as a rescuer of the people in their plight, now instituting systems that perpetuated inequities: those who had jobs and could afford good education and those who did not.

6.5 Early educational encounters: 'restore', don't 'reform'

The general backdrop of divergent expectations also dominated the discourse on education between the AKDN and the Regional Educational Department (RED). The relationship was framed in one unifying vision – to see Badakhshan served by a quality education system that could equip its young to hold their own in relation to any internationally educated young adult (EAOMF; AKF, 1998). It was also framed in differing perspectives of how this was to be done.

The responses to the collapsing education system typified the ideological and cultural distance between the AKF and the regional educational government. Table 2 below exemplifies the divergent perspectives. Both saw a system in economic crisis, but while the government viewed the issue as a monetary one, AKF perceived an unsustainable over-provision in education. Nor was this an AKF experience only. Silova and Steiner Khamsi (2008) recounted similar divergences in Mongolia where what the donors offered prevailed over what was actually needed. They point out that in Soviet times, the discourse was one of overachievement and exceeding targets: now governments had to learn the language of needs and gaps to access funds in the new world order. And they learnt very quickly to both become literate in that language of deficit rather than merit to attract funding as well as how to be creative with the conditionalities attach and use the funds to meet the urgent needs. They became 'policy bilingual' (Silove and Steiner Khamsi 2008 p.16).

| Government perspective | AKF perspective |
|--|---|
| 1. Fill the funding gap that the government has left. | 2. The system needs streamlining, restructuring, decentralising and down-sizing. 5000 teachers serving 55,000 students is educationally desirable but economically unsustainable. |
| 3. Rebuild schools damaged in war and pay the teachers to prevent attrition. Loss of expertise needs stemming. Qualified, experienced teachers do not need training. Pay them instead. | 4. AKF Donors will not fund salaries or rehabilitation. ¹³⁵ They are funding investments in training, school management, and community mobilisation to help reform the system. |
| 5. Then help to restore one 'internat' (a boarding school that also houses orphans) in each of the 8 districts. They could then serve all of the bright children in that district, even primary school children. And the orphans can be taken care of. | 6. We need to work at multiple, intersecting levels within the system and focus on pedagogy, management training, financial training and income generation in schools. We need to work with the IPD to reach the entire system and for long-term sustainability. |
| 7. AKF did not fund the internats, but then created an elite school itself at huge expense. It converted an already excellent school into a private one. Why not build a new one altogether and support the internats and the better Lycees ¹³⁶ in the system? | 8. It is important to have a model of private education to counter the long – entrenched notion of state provision. The school is fee-paying and entry is by merit. With hindsight it should have been built afresh. |
| 9. We have subject specialists in each district serving the schools. Why does AKF | 10. This is a hierarchical, top-down system. Large teams of specialists |

¹³⁵ Silove and Steiner Khamsi (2008) speak to similar issues in Mongolia where the government wanted to rehabilitate and build boarding facilities in urban and semi urban areas to stem the rush to the cities from rural area and the Asian Development Bank would only fund 'quality of education' programmes in regional centres and towns (p 14)

¹³⁶ Schools that had very good results consistently were then designated Lycees, were better funded and staffed.

| | |
|--|--|
| not work with those people and the existing professional development structures instead of working with young, inexperienced university graduates? | oversee the teachers as experts. They are not ready to relinquish that hierarchical role. It was easier to engage with young people more open to new ways of teaching and learning. |
| 11. AKF took on young, inexperienced staff only because they spoke English. When it came to talking to the government or understanding any systemic issues or even classroom practices, they were lost. AKF ignored the existing structures that pertained. | 12. At the outset, the ability to speak English was important. Younger people had a better chance of adapting to innovation. The intent was to build capacity in the region as well. |
| 13. We do not need to change the curriculum. We need help with acquiring text-books. | 14. Textbook provision was an interim measure but is not a long term solution. Teachers need to know how ability to create and use low-cost or no-cost teaching aids because textbooks are often unavailable. |
| 15. We had parent committees during Soviet times. We did not really think they could be useful in mobilising the community. But it worked. Now they are the staunchest supporters of the school, both financially and with in-kind help, They decide if a teacher gets more pay for good performance, or a child gets a stipend, or a poor family gets help with medical bills. | 16. Parent committees needed to be revitalised but also re-cast in the new economic order. They needed to have a charter of their own, the right to fundraise and a say in how the funds were deployed. The community has to contribute to education, or there won't be any for their children. |

Source: developed by the author from data received and documents reviewed.

Table 3: AKDN and Government perspectives on reform

Some of those reservations were voiced for the first time during the data collection phase of this study (such as the issue of AKF's hiring practice)

although others, like the internat issues, had been raised earlier as well and continued to be a bone of contention. The takeover of the Lycee is still cited as one of the things that AKDN did not handle well.¹³⁷ The Lycee experience is also pointed to in discussions about whether the IPD could ever be privatised.

It is not talked about loudly as yet. We are still thinking about it. And if the Lycee was so difficult, IPD will be even more difficult (OMIDJ).

The contesting discourses ranged further with misunderstandings over common terms such as 'curriculum'¹³⁸ or 'integration' which were interpreted differently by AKF expatriate staff and local educators. The refusal to fund internats remains a source of grievance particularly since the AKF and AKES have, since, supported a number of selected schools in the districts. The internal criteria for such support included a dynamic and open leadership from the head teacher, proximity to Khorog for monitoring purposes and proven academic standards in the schools. Not all the internats could have met these criteria, but equally the criteria were never, to my knowledge, openly discussed outside of the AKF and AKES senior managers.

The divergent ideological frames of reference (capitalist and communist) were reflected most sharply in programmatic directions. AKF focused on strategic initiatives at multiple and intersecting levels throughout the system (AKF, 1998-2002) and on building selective capacities at the IPD and the schools. The IPD continued to try and service the whole of the system, working alongside the AKF where appropriate.

¹³⁷ Demand for places at the school, however, is so high and so many children pass the entrance examinations that the Lycee then had to resort to getting the parents to draw lots to see if their children could get in, as the only way of letting the community see the transparency of the process.

¹³⁸ I recall a confusing meeting with the Regional Education Director, in which he insisted that they had an English curriculum and I protested that they did not (1990) until I realised that the Soviet understanding of a curriculum meant syllabus and time-tabling (and not curriculum as I understood it).

The tensions over how to reform the system were not specific to the AKF-Regional government encounter in Badakhshan alone. As Silova and Steiner-Khamis 2008 attest, Mongolia had similar issues with what they wanted to reform and what donors were willing to fund. The FSU countries learnt to frame their needs in agreements such as the Education For All and spoke the language of donors in order to get financial support. (Silova and Steiner-Khamis, 2008)

AKF itself struggled with the disconnect between its own conception of development as being long-term and guided by Muslim ideas of service and self-help, and those of the donor community described in Chapter 3 sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2. But it had to rely on donors whose basis of operation was short term, results-oriented and couched in the language of managerialism. It had to persuade them to provide multi-year funding under relatively flexible budget lines and simultaneously build sufficient local technical and managerial capacity to localise its operations.¹³⁹ The Badakhshanis' conception of development was based far more solidly on egalitarian principles, the abandonment of which was strongly contested. That egalitarianism was now further layered in the expectations related to the fact that this was an Imamati institution, and that the Imam stood for justice and equity and, moreover, continued to stress the importance of education for all (Keshavjee 1998). Socialist and faith principles therefore seemed aligned and in opposition to the conventional development discourses that AKF had to mediate.

6.6 Conclusion

Two discourses are already visible in this first findings chapter: that of a renewal of faith linked with development and ideological distance over educational changes. With respect to faith, the Imam's leadership was pivotal in helping the community to regain a sense of direction and of a future. Because this leadership

¹³⁹ This was one of the main goals of my job (1998-2002): to secure multi-year flexible funding for educational programmes.

manifested in part through the AKDN, it brought a particular perspective to development. However, the complex ideological issues that dominated negotiation over programme directions proposed by AKF, generated contestations even at this early stage. Some of these were rooted in the ideological distance between the AKDN and the Badakhshanis, their expectations of their Imam and his institutions and their unfamiliarity with the international donor discourses and resulting constraints on AKF's development initiatives.

Educational change at this point meant trying to arrive at a common understanding between what Birzea and Vende might call the 'old' and the 'new'. It was also, at this stage, associated with, or part of, both the concretisation of a faith tradition and the adjustment to the sweeping post – Soviet changes. The next chapter looks at how these factors played out in the interactions of the AKF and the IPD.

Chapter 7: IPD and AKF - Encounters and challenges

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 explored the initial encounter of the AKDN and the Badakhshani community, at large and what that meant. This chapter focuses more directly at the interaction of the education community at the IPD with the AKF and at the processes of educational change that were generated over time by that encounter. The data in Chapter 5 pointed to two discourses that emerged. One, a 'private' or more personal discourse, linked to identity and faith, and the person of the Imam and, by extension, to his institutions, although this changed over time. The second, a post –Soviet transition/development discourse, more directly concerned with the exigencies of how to manage change brought about by the post – Soviet transition. This chapter examines how these and other discourses, those of institutional hegemonies, responses to change and resistances played out in the micro-processes of institutional development that the IPD and AKF engaged in.

The encounter between AKF and IPD, although framed by the particular faith perspective of the development experience discussed in Chapter 6, has been markedly different. Here there have been far stronger contestations over how to prevent the collapse of the educational system, how to engage in institutional development and what a partnership means.

7.2 AKF - IPD encounters: a developing relationship

The AKF's decision to focus on the IPD was a pragmatic and an opportune one. The reform of in-service institutions is an obvious point of entry to effecting immediate changes to teaching and learning in the school system. Yet, as Silova and Stiener-Khamies (2008) note, in-service institutions have been systematically ignored by both governments and large international donors,

especially in the Former Soviet Union. Indeed, in Poland such institutions were dismantled as part of the transition reforms. The reasons offered for this include teacher turnover, an aging teacher population and a 'disturbing' attitude amongst international donors that Soviet-indoctrinated teachers are a 'lost generation' not worth investing in (Silova and Stiener-Khamsi 2008 p.32). AKF's concerns lay elsewhere. The IPD was a government institution which could be dismantled or have its mandate or leadership changed at any time. This would jeopardise AKF investment in financial as well as human resource terms. On the other hand, building capacity at the in-service institution ensured programmatic reach and sustainability, as well as responding to the issues of teacher turnover and the management of educational changes visited on teachers without any preparation by central government.¹⁴⁰ (AKF, 1998; 1999; 2000).

The IPD - AKF engagement can be characterised by three distinct phases: the initial encounter, (1996-1998) growing partnership, (1999 -2002) and the grantor-grantee relationship (2002 – 2004) when the data for this study was collected. Each phase signalled a changed relationship between the institutions. Table 3 identifies the phases and the events and perspectives that characterised them.

Table 3: the evolving IPD-AKF relationship (next page)

¹⁴⁰ I contributed to these debates as education programme manager for AKF in 1998.

| PHASE 1 1996-1998 | | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | Personnel and Org Description | Programme Reach | Programme Rationale | Perspective on the Other |
| AKF | Education programme manager + implementation teams led by expatriates with young, local graduates | 1. Primary pedagogies, 2. Educational management and community mobilisation, 3. English at secondary level | Use selective intervention to: 1. Change pedagogies, 2. Introduce school management 3. Community involvement 4. Explore potential of IPD for focus | Consensual, draw in relevant IPD specialists to build their capacity |
| IPD | Director + 1 deputy + subject specialists. Status reduced to an 'office' | All subjects primary and secondary | Service all system, but sometimes drawn into inspectorial role by RED. away from teacher support role | Uncertain about expatriate – led, young people – led initiatives, selective engagement |
| PHASE 2 1999-2002 | | | | |
| | Personnel and Org Description | Programme Reach | Programme Rationale | Perspective on the Other |
| AKF | Better balance of local young and experienced Educators. Secondary team localized | Focus on IPD: 1. Restore physical facilities, 2. Build operation - systemic capacity 3. Continue to change pedagogies | | More involvement through the introduction of operating systems |
| IPD | New charter. Expanded mandate Introduction of ed. management specialist | Mirroring AKF in selective but intense support to teachers. Began research, systemic reform activities and work with head | AKF implementing staff integrated physically into IPD. | Supported in expansion: some tension over salary disparities. Dependent on AKF |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|----------------------------|--|
| | | teachers and district directors | | |
| PHASE 3 2003-2005 | | | | |
| | Personnel and Org Description | Programme Reach | Programme Rationale | Perspective on the Other |
| AKF | Programme manager position downgraded to programme officer and moved to Dushanbe. Senior programme director layer added | No programmes. Grant management responsibilities only | | IPD should now simply deliver. Institutional specialist is support enough |
| IPD | Acquired institutional specialist expatriate in mid 2002 and a new one in 2004 | Pedagogies, educational management , community development, research for upgrading IPD staff Continued government involvement in inspection | | Unsupported, dictated to, tense relationships, struggling to master donor discourses |

During Phase One, (1996-1998) AKF and IPD operated as independent institutions, but with tentative links.¹⁴¹ The AKF-IPD relationship was a consensual one at this time: each saw the other as a potential partner but did not understand - or even agree - with much of how they respectively worked¹⁴². Phase Two, (1999-2002) began when the government restored the IPD to its former status of an institute and the IPD, now ready to move beyond its former role, sought AKF's help with reinventing itself. AKF saw this as the catalyst to re-shape and up-date the institution. It focused on the institutional strengthening of the IPD's capacity, systems, structures and programmes. The period was marked by a series of structural and attendant operational changes at the IPD aligning it more closely to a modern NGO than a regular ex –Soviet government 'method centre' as it was then termed.¹⁴³ AKF and IPD worked in partnership towards securing more autonomy for IPD from the government, creating a new charter giving the institute more transparent structures and a broader mandate that included education management and research, and paving the way for a transfer of implementation of all AKF education programmes to the IPD. Phase Three 2002 – to date, has seen the development of a grantor – grantee relationship between AKF and IPD with all AKF programmes and personnel were integrated into the IPD.

The sections that follow explore these changes. I have set them, under separate headings for ease of access. In fact, the changes were often simultaneous and inevitably interlinked, creating what Offe (1991, cited in Mitter 2003) calls the dilemma of simultaneity. The struggle has been to construct a coherent, sequential narrative about what were sometimes multiple, overlapping changes

¹⁴¹ AKF supported the publication of a newsletter 'Rahnamo' that helped restore contact between the IPD and the teachers. AKF also organised in-set courses and workshops in methodology for English teachers and primary teachers, in which the appropriate IPD specialists worked alongside AKF staff. (IPD work plan 1998)

¹⁴³ The term 'Institute of Professional Development, was coined at that time when the IPD was acquiring its new charter.

that resonated throughout both institutions. This was more a 'mosaic' than a 'string' of events and must be read as such.

7.2.1 AKF-IPD encounters: the consensual phase

When the Khorog State University (KSU) was set up, (1992) it was thought that it might take over the IPD's role of in-service education and the government downgraded the institute to an 'office'. The memory of that bleak time is captured by this participant's observations:

No teacher came to visit us. Imagine! We were teacher training institute but our credibility was zero. But I told them, something made me tell them. It will change...then Jeanette came and we started talking (OMIDJ).

'Jeanette' was the first AKF Education programme manager who set up both the AKF programme and the link with the IPD. IPD staff worked with AKF staff to provide training to teachers and head teachers, and disseminate good practices through a newsletter. Cuts in government budgets affected not just regular salaries at IPD but also funds for workshops and training courses as well as basic materials: paper, flip charts, markers or colour crayons. IPD had no cars to cover the 315 schools in the region, no computers or printers and often no heating in the IPD building. At that time, IPD reports comprised only the work they did with AKF. Nothing else was possible. At this stage the IPD-AKF relationship was a consensual one: each saw the other as a potential partner but did not understand, or even agree with, much of how they respectively worked.

7.2.2 A closer partnership

The first major breakthrough in making closer links with AKF was facilitated by the regional government's restoration of the IPD's status from an 'office' to an 'institute'. This necessitated the creation of a new charter which IPD asked AKF

to help create. The Regional Education Director envisioned an institution that would:

.. serve not just Gorno Badakhshan or even Tajikistan, but become a regional centre for leading edge in-service training and research (OMRDISD).

This opportunity was used by the two institutions to re-cast the IPD as a universally recognisable, modern in-service education institution, something that other evolving institutions in Central Asia were also seeking to become (Reeves 2004). The new charter was the first step on this path to transformation.

7.2.2.1 Structural changes: the IPD charter (1999-2002)

The revised charter reflected a series of structural and operational changes that moved the IPD away from its Soviet origins and brought it closer to a Western style in-service academic institution:

- It changed the composition of the governing board, so that the director was no longer chair and his deputy no longer secretary. IPD now operated under a board of directors comprising all stakeholders (towards transparency and genuine involvement of stakeholders).
- It introduced a new series of committees, including a planning committee, a financial committee and an operations committee, and explored the setting up of an ethical committee (towards democratic governance).
- It created the opportunity to make staff re-apply for their positions, and changed its hiring practices from invitation to join to an interview by a panel comprising AKF and IPD staff (towards meritocracy).
- It appointed, for the first time, a woman deputy to serve alongside the male deputy (towards equity).
- It broadened the IPD's remit, so that it could now train school directors and district directors as well as teachers, and could engage in academic research (towards innovation).

Because Badakhshan is an autonomous region, these changes were made without recourse to the central government which endorsed the charter but did not participate in its creation. This was another innovation in Badakhshan that was watched closely for its efficacy but without the conviction that it would work.¹⁴⁴ Autonomy was, sometimes, a double-edged sword, allowing Badakhshan some room for manoeuvre but at the cost of antagonising national sensitivities.

7.2.2.2 Relationships with regional government

These departures from the norm were carefully negotiated by the IPD through calling on familiar precedents and building up stakeholder support prior to instituting them. As a senior manager at the IPD noted:

The new charter was one of the difficult changes ... I worked with the Trade Union (on changed hiring practices). We had some very serious meetings with them and they were supportive. You see, there was a legal basis for what we were doing. I argued that this was a transparent process and that now that we were going to be a new institution I did not want anyone to say that I had put in my own people and carried them into the new institute (OMIDJ).

It has to be said that while transparency was used as an argument for instituting this process, it was also expedient in enabling IPD to make some staff changes that would otherwise have been difficult in Badakhshan's still-fragile economic situation.¹⁴⁵ The appropriation of certain discourses to meet specific agendas is already apparent at this early stage of the IPD's transformation.

¹⁴⁴ The authorities had watched with similar ambivalence AKDN's land privatisation efforts, health sector reforms such as the creation of an essential drugs list, and the creation of a new charter for the parents' committees in education.

¹⁴⁵ These changes occurred while I was AKF Education programme manager, and I knew the players. The English adviser at IPD was known to be totally ineffective, but it was impossible to terminate his contract given the trade union rules that were operational from the Soviet era. While remuneration was not high, there was still the issue of respect and dignity that could not be transgressed. Even in my own team, not subject to the trade union rules since AKDN was a private organisation, it was very difficult to dismiss ineffective staff because one was aware that

Financial autonomy was much harder to attain: it took the IPD a full year to persuade the Regional Education Director that it needed its own accountant. The RED was reluctant to relinquish financial control :

You remember how long it took to do this? They also (like the trade unions) wanted to keep control. But I argued. "If you are serious about international IPD I need my own accountant" (OMIDJ).

Training and capacity building for IPD staff now expanded to include institutional building through changes in financial accounting systems, hiring processes, resource management and other operational systems. (AKF, 1999-2002). AKF began an accelerated programme of study tours abroad and short courses for IPD staff. IPD created an educational management position and began to run courses for teachers and head teachers with AKF's technical and financial assistance. The two institutions were still operating at arm's length at this stage, but in early 2002 plans were in hand to transfer the AKF implementation team and function to the IPD.

7.2.2.3 Structural changes at AKF

These changes signalled a conceptual and operational shift within IPD to a more autonomous institution, with a stronger financial base. They also attested to AKF's commitment to work through the IPD. The location of the new programme officer's position away from the implementation site to the capital Dushanbe and the layer of new expatriate positions at 'programme director' level in AKF Dushanbe created a fresh set of bureaucratic relationships and tensions between AKF and IPD. The loss of institutional history and a different management style further exacerbated the situation.

they were the mainstay of their families and AKDN was at that time almost the sole employer in the region.

7.2.2.4 Difficult transitions

The transfer of all implementation functions to the IPD marked the beginning of a major change in the AKF-IPD relationship now premised on a grantor-grantee basis. The IPD underwent significant changes in operational and management systems and styles as well as programme scope and reach. These changes took place between 2003 and 2004 and form a part of the data I collected in 2004.

Integration of AKF-IPD staff was a delicate and difficult process which took about a year to accomplish. Salaries had to be brought on par, project leadership and programme directions set, human resource procedures such as performance appraisals introduced, and project design and donor reporting capacities built. Salary adjustments took time and were a source of tension and embarrassment between the two staff

She said, "We are in the same office and I'm ashamed to earn so much more than you. We do the same work" It was embarrassing for her (IYWDDA).

IPD staff occasionally found it difficult to accept AKF local staff leadership and demands for operational efficiencies (AOWPU). The two groups had come from very different organisational cultures: the AKF staff were used to a performance-based operational system, whereas IPD staff salaries had been so low that they had been allowed to work at two or three jobs to supplement their incomes (IOMEMS; IYWDDA). For them, performance appraisal was, under the circumstances, irrelevant. They did recognise, however that the fact that these were introduced for them at six –monthly intervals while the former AKF staff had to wait a year, was designed to enable them to catch up more quickly with the latter (IYWDDA).

AKF staff felt relegated to a government institution:

We had joined AKF. We did not want to be part of IPD/government (AOWSG).

We felt lost. We were not AKF staff and we were not IPD staff. It was hard (AYWMZ).

AKF should not have given everything to IPD. I'm against this localisation (AOWPU).

This feeling was confirmed by an IPD staff member:

Actually AKF staff did not want to be under IPD director (IYWDDA).

As noted in Chapter 6, AKF was the first AKDN institution to come in and rescue the Badakhshanis,¹⁴⁶ and a special status had come to be associated with the organisation. The AKF local staff carried to the IPD a certain discourse learnt at AKF which they were unwilling to relinquish: the image of the progressive, competent, professional who could deliver effective educational innovations, while the government was seen as a group of ineffective bureaucrats who could no longer really meet their obligations to the citizens. AKF staff saw themselves, not as pioneers bringing in innovation to the IPD, but as having to give up an elitist, institutional identity (AKF) and be consigned to what they saw as a 'backward' IPD. As one expatriate put it:

We have managed to get the local people to imitate our discourses of 'us' and 'they' and they use that same language to those not in the AKDN. It's one of the errors of how we have conducted things here (EAOWAD).

IPD staff and leadership also had reservations about some AKF staff who they saw as being bright but young university graduates, with no experience of the education system.

Within a year (2002 -2003) however, salaries, staff duties and departmental

¹⁴⁶ Even during my time, if another AKDN institution tried to attract AKF employees an argument given to them and which sometimes succeeded in getting them to continue working with the AKF was simply that the AKF was the AKF, the other institutions were newer/had a narrower mandate/did not have the same prestige and meaning as the AKF did.

structures were integrated at the IPD.¹⁴⁷ A Memorandum of Understanding between AKF and IPD signed in 2003 formalised the new grantor-grantee relationship that currently obtains. At the time of my first field visit in 2004, the tensions described above had disappeared and a major structural change had been negotiated successfully by both institutions. Less contentious issues now created greater rifts between the two organisations. How people felt they were managed proved to be the main problem, as the next few sections demonstrate.

7.3 IPD-AKF relationships: Grantor and grantee

In 2004, the IPD was a hive of purposeful activity and was well-respected at the grass roots and at government levels. They were delivering an impressive array of programmes both within Badakhshan and to other regions as the IPD work plans (2002-2004) and the donor evaluation reports (2002; 2003; 2004) indicated. (See timeline in Chapter 8 section 8.3.8). In sharp contrast to its earlier sense of redundancy, the institute had, I observed, become the focal point for teachers, head teachers and district education officers alike who looked to it for leadership and guidance. However, the shifts in management and operations inter and intra AKF and IPD had generated a fresh set of issues that are discussed below. The main contestations coalesced around how structural relationships were managed, specific management issues and programmatic know-how.

7.3.1 Policies, personnel and bureaucracies

Part of the grant agreement (2003) contained within it the concept of 'core' and 'non-core' staff. The latter were on fixed contracts: if funding ran out, the basic programme and the former were protected. The system was designed to deal with donor contingencies should those arise, but also to motivate staff into

¹⁴⁷ AKF secured sufficient funding to enable IPD to maintain its own staff and absorb AKF staff on equal terms through donor project funding.

performing better, not just for monetary rewards but for securing permanence in the system. If performance declined, then core status could be lost, introducing a degree of meritocracy into what had been a 'rights-based employment' scenario under the Soviet system.¹⁴⁸ The criteria for designation as core or non-core staff were shared with all staff. The process was both transparent and merit-based. It favoured the IPD staff in that their appraisals and hence chances of salary raises were six monthly: for the AKF staff they were yearly. The boundary between the classifications was porous. The scope for changes in designation:

...pushed people to work (LIWYDD).

Notwithstanding this, however, the distinction was equated to a level of commitment rather than a chance to earn merit:

I was deputy and if I asked someone to do something they would say, "Ask z to do it: s/he is core staff, s/he can stay late. I have to go to do other job; why should I do it?" And I could not force them (LIWYDD).

Core staff, on the other hand were expected to carry extra responsibility and be available for work even up to midnight if necessary. And this had cultural repercussions¹⁴⁹ (IOMEMS). The distinction was also a factor in accessing professional development and thus calling into question the porous nature of the designation:

If they are non-core staff and (we) send them(for professional development) and they leave, then it's a waste (LIWYDD).

The data shows a juxtaposition of the prevailing or, rather, shifting ideologies of communism and capitalism. Non-core staff felt little ownership of their professional work, while core staff sometimes felt 'bought': all of their time and

¹⁴⁸ When instituting the new charter IPD had made its existing staff re-apply for positions and managed to shed some of them at that time.

¹⁴⁹ One male respondent spoke about it was not right for a female colleague to always be going home very late, and how this might attract gossip even if she was an older, well – respected member of the team. 'I told them. This is Khorog. It's not good. People talk' (IOMEMS). During the field visit, husbands sometimes came to 'escort' but also check on their wives who were consistently working late into the night because of a donor report crisis.

efforts were owned (ILWYMAN, OILWSEC, LMYEMN). Professional development was now also subjected to economic scrutiny rather than a matter of weighing capabilities or building human capital (LIYWDEP). Interestingly, observation above came from IPD staff and attests to the speed with which the ideological shifts were being made. However, this was not the only source of tension between IPD and AKF.

In principle, AKF pulling back to a position of a grantor with IPD as the grantee should have given IPD more autonomy, with greater control over budgets for operational purposes including professional development. In practice, however, the system served to constrain IPD operations and was perceived as a withdrawal of support rather than empowerment or freedom of action. The issue seemed to be as much about how procedures were managed as about the policies themselves.

This increased control expressed itself in more bureaucratic procedures on the one hand:

When you were there and we needed money for workshops or because we were going to Moscow, we came to you, you checked the amounts and we got it from M (the finance director). Now we must write a requisition, it goes to AKF Khorog then to Dushanbe and then it's signed by I (the education programme officer) and by W (Director of Programmes). It's so complicated now. And if any one of them is on leave or travelling then we can be waiting for days for the money (IYMF).

And a rigidity of operation on the other:

Once I needed urgently to repair the computer. I went to the IPD accountant and explained. He said he'd have to check with Dushanbe. It was 61 sommoni (about 3 USD). I told him I could not wait. This thing was urgent. He gave me the money and he got into trouble for it. 60 sommoni! They said he should not have given it to me. He had to go to AKF Khorog Finance to claim it back, and they had to go to AKF Dushanbe Finance, who gave it back to the AKF Khorog office and then he got it

back. It took almost a month to do all that. Can you imagine that! (IYMF).

To the traditional and official Soviet legacy of hierarchies were now added new structures created by AKF that served to circumscribe the natural, communal networks that would otherwise have been operational and that had functioned even during Soviet times, making it possible for people to work quickly, effectively and resourcefully. That the complaint of over –bureaucratisation comes from someone familiar with Soviet bureaucracy is interesting and attests to the level of frustration with the process.

Bureaucratic control was also evident in the way funding for agreed programmatic activities had to be obtained and expenses justified. At this stage, money was transferred to IPD on a quarterly basis:

First you tell them about expenses in your yearly plan, then in six month report, then in the quarterly report and then again each time you take the money. They know what it is for. Sometimes I just feel like paying it myself.... all these justifications! But I can't afford it. By the time you get to the training you are tired already. The training is the easiest part of it all (AOWSG).

And again:

When you go for professional development, they know the programme but you still have to justify what you are doing each day (AOWPU).

Ultimately this seemed to indicate a cumulative erosion of trust rather than simply too much administration:

They say there is no funding (for professional development) but who knows what the real truth is? You never know (AOWPU).

Yet the two organisations had managed to negotiate integration without this degree of loss of trust. The issues of trust were exacerbated over the acquisition and exercise of knowledge – power and manifested themselves in perceived

leadership and management gaps. They were expressed frustration over epistemologies of acquiring new learning.

7.3.2 Support and leadership

Two factors contributed to the tensions that developed between AKF and IPD. Firstly, the comprehensive senior management changes at AKF outlined above meant that there was very little institutional memory of what the IPD's capacity was and where it might need support in the project cycle of creating funding proposals, designing and implementing programmes and producing reports for donors.¹⁵⁰

Secondly, AKF management now interpreted its own responsibility as one of financial regulation only. It withdrew technical support over programmatic issues under the mistaken assumption that IPD's intuitional specialist should fill all gaps in that direction, notwithstanding the fact that this position also had a new occupant in 2003 (EAOMJ; OMOIDJ).

As a grantee, IPD was simply expected to deliver programmes and reports according to donor specifications and on time. Any shortcoming on IPD's part was seen as incompetence bringing into question AKF's investment rather than as an opportunity to review or extend professional development (IWOS) (IYWDD; IYWDDX; AOWSG).

The IPD was well equipped to deliver what the school system needed: educational resources, teacher support materials, and student – centred

¹⁵⁰ The perspectives on a meeting over IPD's changed status demonstrate this: the IPD director commented; 'I did not know how to prepare....I could not go to AKF to ask for help. They asked what I wanted but I did not know.' The AKF senior manager's comment was: 'I asked him what he wanted. He did not know!' (Field visit 2004).

pedagogies. (IPD, 2002, 2003, 2004). How to manage its own transformation as an NGO –type institution, delivering to donor demands was more challenging. The sharing of knowledge was systemised in two processes: the provision of formal professional development (section 7.3.3) and the ‘on the job’ learning of the processes related to donor funding, such as report writing, designing of projects, data collection and baseline studies (section 7.3.5).

7.3.3 Professional development ... ‘then show me something’

The new IPD charter had stipulated and provided for staff to undertake or complete their Master’s degrees and doctorates as well as have exposure to short study tours and courses. Professional development was seen as the path to promotion, retention or even re-employment by other organisations and as adding to staff’s bargaining powers.¹⁵¹ Frustration had to do with the lack of planning and clarity over funding, timing, the selection of the type of professional development on offer and who could receive it. It was not unusual to hear of professional development trips being aborted,¹⁵² either because there had been a miscalculation over the budget or insufficient planning meant that visas were not ready on time. Sometimes the professional development available was not relevant (AOWSG; AOWPU).

They tell you there is money for professional development, go find a course. Then they say the money is not there. And the professional development they find is a waste of time... just to spend the money (AOWPU).

There was also a feeling that the selection for professional development was not always an entirely fair process. The fact that capacity-building in this direction was not systematic, added to this possibly mistaken assumption.

¹⁵¹ During my time as manager, the AKDN institutions often had their staff ‘poached’ from them because they were well trained.

¹⁵² When I returned to England, I myself had been asked by IPD staff to find them professional development opportunities, and then told within a couple of weeks that there had been a miscalculation and that there was no budget for it.

How can you say my English is not good enough to do the course? It is worse than Ts? Or Ps? (IOWPU).

Finally, there were concerns about the link between professional development and performance appraisals:

If you are saying I'm not growth (i.e. I have not grown on the job) then show me something. Send me somewhere or bring me a consultant (IOWPU).

One time, only S and I did not get professional development. Everybody had gone somewhere. So then we just joked to make ourselves feel better and said "we are too smart. We don't need professional development" (AYWEMN).

Formal professional development remains a contentious issue at IPD even after localisation, as Chapter 8 section 8.3.5 attests. However, the knowledge acquisition issues ranged much wider and encompassed on- the- job learning as well.

7.3.4 Learning to manage programmes – global agendas, local needs

On-the-job options for development were circumscribed by too much programmatic activity. The pace of work, driven as it was by donor agendas, left no time for growth or self-reflection and this, coupled with frustrations over professional development, were taking their toll. As IPD's interaction with donors, evaluators and consultants increased, the importance of English was emphasised. Those who had mastered it could access materials and resources more readily. Moreover, the core staff /non-core staff policy focused attention on the need to acquire programme expertise and the effectiveness of performance:

I told them if I don't learn English it is your fault. Give me three months and I'll learn it (IOMEMS).

Time for research is short. Time generally is short (IYMITF).

The lack of time was corroborated by the IPD's year plans: the primary team of six specialists alone was running 90 workshops during the year,¹⁵³ and felt pulled in too many directions at once (IPD, 2003-4). The participants highlighted a number of concerns centred on:

- The quality of the programmes they delivered (IOWPU; IOWSG)
- The lack of time to monitor the efficacy of what they had delivered and support teachers with implementation (AOWPU; AYWLRCN; AOWSG)
- Insufficient time between workshops to change delivery and content to make them better (IOWPU; IYWLRCN)
- No time for self-reflection and innovation (IOWPU; IOMEMJ)

Ironically, in my estimation, the staff's very objections attested to their own growing professionalism. Previously, their focus had been on being able to simply deliver programmes: now attention had shifted to reflexivity in programme delivery. A central concern was to ensure quality, effectiveness and impact, and the need therefore to monitor programmes. There was also a feeling that space for creativity and growth was crowded out with too much activity:

We are just doing, doing, doing (IOWPU).

It's the same thing again and again; I mean there is nothing new (IOWSG).

Both morale and motivation were low: staff stayed on simply because their alternative employment options were limited.

My wife says, "We don't need your money but for you to be here." But what can we do? If I say I don't want to go to the districts they say "okay you can leave the job." But where can we go? (IYMEMN).

The IPD senior management should think about our motivation. It is really low in IPD at the moment (IOMEMS).

¹⁵³ They were assisted by a cadre of key teachers who had been identified and trained in each of the eight districts of Badakhshan but the workload was still intense.

In part, this was also an issue of globalised donor agendas driving local development. Inasmuch as staff salaries were paid from donor 'project staff' monies, IPD was obliged to meet all and only donors' agendas. Its very existence depended on doing so but that also made it vulnerable to the vicissitudes of donor perspectives on development. One such regressive development view was that of USAID, which insisted on supporting basic primary education only, overlooking the fact that in the Former Soviet Union, secondary and tertiary education were already highly developed. USAID was a big donor for IPD, however, and secondary programmes at the institute suffered as a result (IOWSG).

7.3.5 Managing 'on the job' learning – epistemologies and institutional development

Planning had always been a 'top-down' process under the Soviet system (Heyneman et. al 2004). Issues of strategic planning which involved translating a vision into a well-articulated 'road map' to position the institution to meet development needs as well as respond to the global discourses of the donors, was a new phenomenon. The skills of proposal writing, performance – based donor reports and other programme documentation were new. As previously noted, the strained AKF – IPD relationship did not facilitate an exchange of experience and learning between the two organisations at this time (2003-4). These gaps in IPD's knowledge and skills were not seen by the AKF leadership as opportunities for providing support for growth or an acknowledgement of the possibility that AKF itself might not have built capacity in all the spheres that it was now asking IPD to operate in (Chapter 8 section 3.3).

This was not just an issue of learning the language of donors, but also of learning the philosophy of aid. As Silova and Steiner-Khamsi note:

....it was necessary to emphasise needs, not accomplishments
(Silova and Steiner-Khamsi 2008 p.14).

and this was in diametric opposition to Soviet times, when Ministries were socialised to demonstrate that they not only met but exceeded targets and goals. The effort to understand 'donor-speak' as part of the development discourse created problems at the implementation level as well. During my data collection (2004), the IPD was struggling with understanding the demands of one particular donor. This was a complicated grant which IPD was expected to deliver on. Staff suddenly found themselves having to re-conceptualise their engagement with schools, write reports for donors where they had usually provided information for reports to donors¹⁵⁴ and respond to questions about data they had not collected. The grant proposal had been written by IPD and AKF senior management, but the actual project design had not been well understood and talked through in sufficient detail by both institutions between themselves and with IPD's implementing staff. The issues for the local staff ranged from differences over the interpretation of what the donor wanted, to the lack of guidance from their leaders, both at IPD and at AKF. On programme design, they had not been made aware of what the proposal had promised in terms of coverage or the kind of data to be collected, maintained and reported on.

We don't mind, but if they tell us, explain to us what is needed before. Then we can do it (AYWMEN)

We continue, and then suddenly: "no, you should have done this, not that" (AYWLRCN).

And they didn't explain what was wanted. And now when we can't do it, they say "you should have known" (AOWSG).

With respect to reporting the local staff had not been engaged in writing comprehensive donor reports but rather in writing workshop and monitoring reports¹⁵⁵ – which were difficult enough in this still largely oral culture:

¹⁵⁴ I wondered in fact if this had been a failing on my part during my time there, since I had not insisted that every component should write its own reports, but did them myself with my deputy, whom I was grooming to replace me.

¹⁵⁵ This was something I had introduced as a step towards report writing. Even very small one-page report could cause stress, because they were unused to doing them. In this culture even university examinations were oral, except when they involved translation from one language to

When it was with you, you would sit with us, yes? Tell us what was good, yes? And then: "But". We knew there was a "but", but you explained and worked with us. Now it just comes back. "It's not good, do it again," but no explanation (AOWPU).

Sometimes we need help. Executive summary. What is that? How do I find it to do it? It's no good just giving me a paper and saying "do it like this one." Sit with me, show me (YAWMZ).

I know I have to learn many things but not like this, under pressure. It's Sunday and they tell me to produce success stories in journalistic way, for tomorrow. I don't know how to do it (AYWEMN).

And if we can't do something, then they say "IPD is not working well. We should stop funding you." Like this (AOWG).

This was an issue of epistemology, of cultural ways of learning and, given the acceleration of activities at the IPD mentioned earlier, perhaps also one of finding time to attend to on-the-job learning. However, it was experienced as a withholding of knowledge as well. In articulating how they could not learn under pressure, the IPD staff also indicated how they *could* learn. In this largely oral culture, it was not surprising that staff asked those who would teach them to 'sit with me and explain' (AYWMZ; AOWSG) or 'show me something... send me out or bring me a consultant' (IOWPU). Learning was also best undertaken by incremental experimentation, where the learner had the time and the freedom to move at their own pace and try things out in concrete settings.

At first (after the training) I was confused. I thought I did not know how to teach all these years! Then what to do? Then slowly I tried some things and then more and more, till I became comfortable with the new method (AOWSG).

Practice and repetition are an essential part of learning in an oral culture, as is demonstration, whether visual or oral.

another. The local deputy who worked with me had just begun to put the entire reports together (he had long mastered funding issues better than I had) when I left the job.

Role modelling and sharing information is another very cultural, and for the Badakhshanis a very natural, way to learn. In speaking of how people viewed AKDN one respondent said:

They see.... because for example, I work in AKDN then I talk to my friend... I am only saying as example, I say to my friend, "no, you should do like this, you should think like this or do like this". Then she does it that way (IYWDD).

Because we learn from consultants if we work closely with them (IOWPU).

However, role modelling inevitably results in intentional as well as unintentional learning. Hence it is not perhaps surprising that in time IPD began to model its own image of itself as being better than and different from the rest of the government apparatus, as the local, former AKF personnel had done in relation to the IPD. In a sense, their public-private status after they became an AKF grantee did set them apart from the rest of the regional education authorities. Chapter 9 looks at this 'hybridity' in IPD more closely. Had AKF paid more attention to how the local culture shaped epistemologies, then it is possible that the tensions over how to produce what AKF demanded at short notice would have been lessened.

7.4 The IPD transforming

Much of the contestation between AKF and IPD arose with respect to a gap in knowing how to manage the transformation of the IPD from a soviet institution to one that would be readily recognised as a semi-autonomous NGO. While technical professional development was being focused on, a more urgent but less readily recognised issue was that of institutional dependency. The response to my questions about future funding and strategic directions was:

If we don't get more funding (for 2006 onwards) then we will become a part of AKES or AKHP¹⁵⁶ (EAOMISH, IOMDJ),

and:

We don't do strategic planning. AKF does that for us (EAOMISH, IOMDJ),

The IPD leadership saw no contradictions between these stances and their bid for autonomy. My own field notes at the time state:

IPD does not seem concerned at the fact that it is still dependent on AKF for its direction. The situation where it might not be absorbed into AKES or AKHP is not something they have planned for (field note: May 2004).

In fact, when funding did run out at the end of 2005 both AKES and AKHP refused to absorb the IPD. The institution found itself in a state of crisis. It was a salutary lesson for the IPD on self – reliance, but a productive one, as is discussed in Chapter 8. In 2004, the IPD was not, as yet, in control of its own development trajectory but it was a matter of time as the next chapter demonstrates, before it took charge of itself.

It would be wrong to see the IPD as simply a victim of the rapid and multiple changes outlined in this chapter. It did not merely allow itself to be dominated but challenged the AKF's 'managerial bourgeoisie' (Keshavjee 1998) in a number of ways. Resistance was both overt and covert. How IPD dealt with the struggles depicted in this chapter and its 'coming of age' is the focus of the next chapter. Here, it is sufficient to say that the contestations were there from the outset of the AKF-IPD encounter. They were dispersed and reflected Foucauldian micro-technologies of the individual exercise of power until 2005, when it was possible to mount a wider challenge to the hegemonies (see Chapter 8 section 8.3) more

¹⁵⁶ The Aga Khan Humanities Project had worked at the tertiary level with national and regional universities, and there was some indication that their work would include schools and hence the IPD.

resonant with Gramsci's notions of the rise of 'organic intellectuals'. Both these are discussed in more detail in Chapter 9. This chapter closes with a few reflections on what institutional change had meant for the IPD so far.

7.4.1 The IPD in post-Soviet transition

A number of discourses and processes are at play in the IPD –AKF encounter: local and global, institutional and individual. Chapter 3 section 3.3 sets out the globalising discourses that govern international development efforts: neo-liberal agendas underlying the provision of aid (Hulmes and Edwards 1997) the conceptualisation of development in economic terms to the exclusion of cultural perspectives (Stephens 2007) and the hegemonies inherent in educational transfers (Mehrtan, Crossley and Johnson). Their presence is evident in two ways in the IPD – AKF encounter. Firstly they determined the programmes that are undertaken and the contestations over the specific donor requirements that affected design and delivery. Secondly, the reporting of the activities, data collection and collation and their compilation in a particular format and language is dictated by the donors. But it is not possible to draw a simple 'external/internal' dichotomy in how change is dealt with. As Reeves observes in looking at the American University in Kyrgyzstan, Institutional change is far more complex than that involving already –existing internal discourses as well as evolving identities. (Reeves, 2004).

At the institutional level, the encounter also makes visible the processes of change in both, how the IPD itself functions as well as how it delivers programmes to its constituents. It demonstrates the co-existence of the 'old' and the 'new' and the inherent tensions between them. The 'bridge' in this case is that of a faith perspective as well as the congruence of the underlying objective of providing quality education in the region that prevents a total rupture. The learning that is generated, described by Birzea and Venda as central to the processes of change in the post-Soviet transition is also present at the IPD. Present, too, is the IPD's view of itself and its changing relationship with

government which is taken up in the next chapter. The implication of the IPD's transformation is discussed more fully in Chapter 9. Here it is sufficient to note the multiplicity of processes involved.

7.4.2 The faith perspective?

In Chapter 6, two sets of discourses were coming to the fore, brought about by two new presences in the region: that of faith and of the post-Soviet transition. The implications of the post-Soviet transition on the IPD have been the focus of this chapter: issues of faith have receded in the background. But they are not absent from the lives of those at the IPD and the AKF. Reflecting on this particular period a respondent commented:

I was very proud to work with AKF. For me, money and salary was not as important as the image of working with AKF. Even ID card of AKF employee that I kept, meant a lot for me. Gradually things changed. may be from my point of view but I saw conflicts unprofessionalism among the AKF expatriates (among those that I thought of to be the most devotees to Aga-Khan and its institutions as they had more exposure and experiences working with HIS HIGHNESS institutions and policies). Then I lost some my previous motivation and enthusiasm that I have had..... (AOWSG).

Recalling a time when her/his job was on the line, another respondent recalls:

...you remember that time when I nearly lost my job. And I said to Mawla (the Imam) if I'm toza (clean, pure, have integrity) then I will not lose this job. And I am here (AOWYU)

Here the appeal is for justice. In another instance, a participant who, as I observed, often paid for work-related expenses (like books from personal funds, work, recalled how s/he forgot to account for the price of a cup of tea in 2003, and remarked:

I still feel bad about that even though I've paid back in other ways (AOWSG).

These perspectives were not confined to the IPD and AKF alone. As the next chapter discusses, they continued to be a part of the communal discourse as well as which was also continuing to evolve.

The encounter between AKF and IPD, although framed by the particular faith perspective of development experience discussed in Chapter 6, has been marked by far stronger contestations over how to prevent the collapse of the educational system, how to engage in institutional development and what a partnership means.

As an examination of the data suggests, the AKF-IPD interactions are punctuated by ebb and flow of convergent and divergent discourses. There was a common willingness to reform the system but disagreement on how to do it. Different agendas surfaced: AKDN sought to protect its investment, and the IPD, its power hierarchies. The struggles with old and new structures and systems were compounded with competing local, national and global interests. The local educators enhance individual prospects, grapple with community loyalties as well as demands, engage in innovation and deal with hierarchies and power relationships.

AKDN is now seen to initiate change, generating various discourses of power, knowledge, and management, within the educational sector. These, as discussed in the next chapter, are challenged through responses that are measured and nuanced. This shift in perspective (from the religiosity associated with the AKDN noted in Chapter 6) has also led to some necessary distancing of the figure of the Imam from his agencies as is discussed in Chapter 8.

7.5 Conclusion

The process of institutionalising innovation at the IPD revealed yet another facet of the AKF-IPD relationship as the two institutions navigated the processes of

that transformation, the impact of globalised and local agendas on it and the forms of hegemonies that characterised it. There was, also, a marked shift in the two discourses identified in Chapter 7 with the post-Soviet transition and institutional change discourses coming to the fore and the faith perspective receding to the background, still present, but more interiorised and personal now. There is, too, an emergent critique of the changes introduced at the IPD by the participants, not so much a total rejection of the changes but a nuanced reflection of how they might have been differently handled in some cases.

The next chapter takes the discussion of these changes a stage further, as full localisation of AKF operations created the space for the IPD to take charge of its own transformation. It examines how this was done, and considers the implications for development and change that this highlights. It does this by also bringing back into focus the IPD's relationship with the rest of the Regional Education Department as the institutio's sense of itself evolves. The chapter also it reviews the faith perspective. That serves to bring in the collective reflections of the actors in change on the meaning of educational change in this part of the world and leave me as researcher to pull the final insights together.

Chapter 8: 'Yes, but it is different now!' Actors realigning

8.1 Introduction

The last chapter described changes within the IPD witnessed in the summer of 2004. This chapter examines how it responded to those changes. It traces the course of the IPD's empowerment through resistance, both individual and collective. Moving ahead in time, this chapter tracks the dramatic changes in the institutional dynamics between AKF and IPD from 2004 to 2006. It examines how the IPD has consolidated its position as a leading institution for educational innovation and focuses on two contributory developments: the localisation of AKF leadership and the setting up of Logos, an entrepreneurial arm of the IPD. Drawing back from the close scrutiny of changes within the IPD the chapter also explores two other aspects of institutional development alluded to, but not dwelt upon in Chapter 7: the re-invented IPD's changed relationship with regional and national government and how the community's evolving relationship with the AKDN and the AKF leads to a re-appraisal of the link between the Aga Khan and his institutions from the faith perspective.

That completes for the purposes of this research the empirical narrative of the processes of educational change identified through an institutional encounter and an institutional transformation tracked over almost a decade. The next chapter analyses the processes captured in the three previous chapters, and seeks an understanding of the meaning of educational change processes as made visible through institutional transformation.

8.2 Responses and resistance

As noted in the last chapter, the IPD did not simply allow itself to be dominated. In fact the very communication of their feelings and experiences to me as a researcher was an act of resistance on the part of the IPD staff. They were

aware of the concerns over my presence there and the conditionalities placed on me, and deliberately sought ways around these to meet with me and share their perspectives. As noted in Chapter 5 sections 5.81 and 5.82, they used the research interview to get their views across, making conscious choices on how much I could record. AKF's 'managerial bourgeoisie' (Keshavjee 1998) was challenged in a variety of covert and overt ways. Resistance was:

....dispersed in fields we do not conveniently associate with the political: residing sometimes in the evasion of norms or the failure to respect ruling standards of conscience and responsibility... From this perspective, even withdrawal from or simple indifference to the legitimating structure of the political with their demand for recognition and meanings which they necessarily manufacture can be construed as a form of resistance (Rosalind O Hanlon 1998, pg 223 cited in (Fishman, 1998) p. 205.

Fishman goes further to attest that resistance is:

...one of the many forms of negotiation that takes place over many symbolic and ideological forms of action (ibid).

The use of agential powers as manifested at IPD were sometimes located in finding room for manoeuvre or circumventing certain constraints within the new rules¹⁵⁷ (see section 8.2. Sometimes an outright challenge was mounted despite the knowledge that it could not succeed.¹⁵⁸ Structural changes were the first to be challenged.

8.2.1 Resistance to structural changes: atrophy

Despite the fact that the IPD charter was set up in 2000, in practice, by 2004, it was neither fully embedded in the organisation nor were the committees

¹⁵⁷ Respondents were constantly re-taking power for themselves in small ways in the Foucaudian sense, often, not evading a norm but, rather, using it to advantage. They would point out that if I invited them home for lunch, no-one could prevent them seeing me. Lunch-times were their own.

¹⁵⁸ Gramsci speaks to how the very act of mounting a challenge, successful or otherwise, and the raised level of self-awareness that it generates, amounts to a form of resistance.

functional. The board had met regularly at the outset, when the institutional specialist was there to ensure transparency of governance and a strong local leader had been elected chair. But the structures did not endure beyond their presence, and by the time of the data collection they had been allowed to atrophy to a large extent. Only the planning committee could produce minutes attesting to regular meetings. The reasons given for this were that the democratic nature of the committees had undermined their functionality in unforeseen ways:

I think we did it wrong. We should have had the programme leaders on the planning committee, but we elected non-planners. Then that does not work (IOMEMS).

The committees did not function because we did not elect the right people. For example, the planning was done by the component heads and they who were not on the planning committee (AYMPMZ).

And that the new institutional specialist (who replaced the first one in 2003) had other ideas about governance:

X did not think they (the committees) were very useful. He thinks we should work more closely with the IED¹⁵⁹ and create a high-powered governing council that can guide us (IMODJ).

However, some committees still function, partly at least:

We do have some (committees) running. The Director meets with the finance committee every month. But they don't keep minutes. It is an oral discussion (IYWDDA).

It is interesting to note that the structures are not amended but simply discarded. In part, they were alien to the IPD, and the institution needed more time for them to take hold and become embedded in it. They had been set up to reflect a 'modern' educational institution, one which potential donors would find reassuringly familiar and hopefully invest in: a case of globalising discourses dominating local institutional development. But they were also set up with the

¹⁵⁹ The Institute of Educational Development is a part of the Aga Khan University in Pakistan and IPD staff were often sent there for professional development.

expectation that, in time, they would both teach and reflect a level of transparency and 'good' governance.¹⁶⁰ A development goal that was not then followed up by AKF.

As noted in Chapter 7 section 7.2.2.1), the affairs of the IPD were previously governed by a council chaired by the IPD Director, with his deputy as secretary. The new structures represented a level of oversight by other stakeholders, including the Regional Education Department and the trade unions that was, perhaps, not always welcomed. It is significant that the IPD director did not move to defend or retain the structures which he had so carefully negotiated (Chapter 7 section 7.2.2.2) and which he had been fully involved in setting up with the AKF funded consultant. Moreover, the paperwork involved in a Western-style committee structure must have seemed formidable, to both those who had to produce the papers and those who had to read them, and that may have contributed to the non-functioning of the committees although the continued functioning of the planning committee suggests otherwise.

Another contributory factor was that the rapid change of personnel in both AKF and IPD at that time provided the opportunity to let the structures slide. Between 2002 and 2004, IPD had had two institutional specialists, and AKF senior management had also changed twice. The high turnover left successive managers and specialists with little time to consolidate any innovations they introduced. Additionally, AKF and IPD had not developed a definitive strategy for the governance of the IPD for successive institutional specialists to follow.

Hence IPD was left to struggle with the perspectives and whims of each new institutional development expert that came along. This lack of consistency and of attention to governance issues indicates a gap in AKF, either of experience or of expertise or both. Be that as it may, the inability of succeeding institutional specialist to challenge departures from jointly-initiated governance practices

¹⁶⁰ Notes on conversation with the consultant who had set up the charter: (Dec 2004).

enabled IPD to shape operations somewhat to its advantage in this instance. Given the speed and frequency of changes being introduced by AKF, it was very possible to err on the side of omission and simply ignore the implementation of some changes.

That there might be an element of local expediency in retaining a charter reflecting Western- style governance and transparency in theory but ignoring it in practice cannot be ruled out.¹⁶¹ When Logos, an entrepreneurial arm of the IPD, was established in 2005, (see section 8.3.4) the institute reverted to a tighter, more traditional structure with the director as the head of the Logos board, and the head of Logos and one AKF representative as members. Neither the wider educational stakeholders nor the IPD deputies are represented on that particular board. However, Logos, set up with donor funding and designed to introduce a degree of financial independence to the IPD, does provide AKF with monthly financial reports.¹⁶²

8.2.2 Circumvention, avoidance, determination

Circumvention is another common strategy that was used. In my time (1998-2002), I had witnessed new hiring procedures being effectively circumvented when all the candidates for the advertised deputy director position suddenly withdrew from the process to enable one particular person to get the position (2001). Indeed the way my own research was conducted attested to the community's ability to circumvent constraints:

Invite us home for lunch. Nobody can ask me where I am during lunch time (AYWMZ).

¹⁶¹ This 'NGO speak' is something that is increasingly evident throughout Central Asia as the institutions become more familiar with the Western agendas and pre-occupations with visible gender equity, participatory approaches etc. Since the support from the West is based on these conditionalities, the response that is elicited when these conditionalities are not culturally appropriate is tokenism.

¹⁶² I understand that these arrangements were under review in late 2006 with AKF considering a broader stakeholder representation at the Logos board as well

Lunch hour was free time, to be used as one pleased. Playing strictly by the rules constituted its own form of protest. Resistance also found expression in a determination to prove AKF wrong, to demonstrate competence and merit:

When they said we were no good, I wanted to do even better, you know...to show them that, look, this is my work (AOWSG).

And in avoidance:

You know, I told you before that we were hired by AKF I mean we felt AKF. But that time we did not even want to go into the office. If you went, it was always "oh IPD is like this and IPD is like that" (AOWSG).

And finally in simply biding one's time:

There was no space for negotiation and my job was reduced to grant management only at that time. S/he kept feeling that I wanted his/her job, that IPD was against him/her (AYMPMZ).

In some areas, the resistance was overt.

8.2.3 Overt resistance 'big fights'

IPD's growing confidence in its own technical ability and the appearance of cracks in the hegemony of knowledge – power were evident in the direct challenges that it posed to AKF on occasion. Delivery of training was a one such contested area, as was day-to-day management of programmes

I had big fight with I. We had worked out a new initiative, to work together with the teacher, with children directly. The children did not want to go home! We called it "learning is fun", but I would not let us. "You train teachers, then they can work with children." In the end N, poor N, had to do it that way. But then how was it different from anything else we did? (AYWMEN).

Of course we argued, we said it should not be like this. But in the end we have to do. They say “do it,” and we have to do (IYWDDA).

So if they say “do it like this,” it should be done even if they do not understand local issues. You have to do it so because they say so (AOWSG).

Compliance was forthcoming under compulsion only because the AKF had hierarchical power and not out of conviction. What resulted was a form of detachment and in mechanically doing what was required:

N did it their way. But it was no longer something different, something new. It lost its...its....flavour (IYWDDA).

The task that IPD had in transforming itself from a Soviet, public in-service institution to a semi-private NGO type organisation should not be underestimated. To the discourse of ‘NGO – speak’, culturally unfamiliar governance practices, new ways of demonstrating transparency, and gaps in the knowledge needed both at IPD level and AKF level to make things work, it is important to add the speed of changes. It is perhaps not improbable that the IPD felt overwhelmed by the processes of changes which it had to undergo, and so resisted too much change. But when I returned to the field in 2006, much of these tensions had disappeared. The next section looks at why.

8.3 Localisation: ‘it’s all different now’

I returned to the field in 2006 to give back my impressions distilled from the data collected in 2004. Much had changed. In confirming my data, participants invariably added, ‘but it’s all different now’. It was different because the AKF CEO position had been localised in keeping with AKDN’s long term development strategy.

8.3.1 Structural and management changes:

Within months of the local CEO taking charge, I observed a number of important structural and managerial changes at the IPD and at AKF. The additional layers of senior-level AKF Tajikistan positions staffed by expatriates as well as the institutional position at IPD were eliminated through attrition. The AKF education programme officer position was localised, and restored to that of a programme manager. Structurally, AKF had once again simplified the lines of reporting and operation, which almost reverted to where they were prior to 2002. More significantly, IPD now worked directly with a locally-run AKF in Tajikistan managed by people it knew well, who were from the same community and spoke the same language literally as well as with respect to how the institutions were run.

Another important change was in financial management. Instead of receiving its budget in quarterly instalments, with many attendant bureaucratic procedures (see Chapter 7, section 7.3.1) IPD was now given control of its own resources and budgets, streamlining accounting procedures, creating a sense of autonomy within IPD and restoring trust between the institutions.

We were actually implementers but we were not heard. We just had to follow orders. We were dictated to. Now we are free... (IYWDDN).

There was now a more equal, participatory approach between grantor and grantee:

.....there, (at AKF) they ask us, we discuss together. They (AKF) don't do without asking' (IOWSG).

Now we are asked (IYWDDA).

And a more accurate reflection of the symbiotic relationship between the two institutions:

We are doing their (AKF's) job here and they understood this (IYMITF) (IYWDDA).

Perhaps it was not AKF who had not understood this correctly in the past but the IPD itself. However, now there was no doubt about how things really stood:

If no IPD, then no AKF (IYWLRCN).

The renewed sense of confidence was strong enough to brook the pragmatic:

There is always some bureaucracy. You can't have no bureaucracy (at all) in finance. But now it's simpler. We have our own budget now, and we handle it ourselves (IYMFMA).

Table 4 below illustrates the change in discourse.

| 2004 | 2006 |
|--|---|
| '...I told him I could not wait. This thing was urgent. He gave me the money and he got into trouble for it. 60 sommonil! They said he should not have given it to me. He had to go to AKF Khorog Finance to claim it back and they had to go to AKF Dushanbe Finance, who gave it back to the AKF Khorog office and then he got it back. It took almost a month to do all that. Can you imagine that?' (IYMTF). | 'There is always some bureaucracy. You can't have no bureaucracy in finance. But now it's simpler. We have our own budget now and we handle it ourselves' (IYMFMA). |
| 'So if they say "do it like this," it should be done, even if they do not understand local issues. You have to do it so because I say so' (AOWSG). | 'There (at AKF) they ask us, we discuss together. They (AKF) don't do without asking' (AOWsG). |
| 'You know, I told you before that we were hired by AKF; I mean we felt AKF. But that time we did not even want to go into the office. If you went it was always "oh, IPD is like this and IPD is like that" (AOWSG). | 'We are doing their (AKF's) job here, and they understood this' (IYMITF) (IYWDDA). |
| 'Of course, we argued; we said it should not be like this. But in the end we have to do. They say do it and we have to do' (IYWDDA). | 'If no IPD, then no AKF' (IYWLRCNZ). |

Table 4: The changed IPD discourse between 2004 and 2006

What is evident is the sense of empowerment that the IPD now felt. The hegemonic discourse of the previous AKF senior management had served to obscure from IPD the centrality of its own position vis-à-vis the AKF mandate. The new CEO was explicit about how he saw things when he took over:

When I talked to AKF they said, “ IPD is bad:” when I talked to IPD, they said, “AKF is bad.” But if I don’t work with IPD, whom can I work with then? How can we reach the schools? (AOMCEO).

It was this simple but central truth that had needed re-stating to restore the IPD-AKF relationship to that of a mutual partnership. The knowledge – power of the expatriates over donor and international discourses had been emphasised, but not the pivotal role of the IPD in delivering good educational services to the region on a sustainable basis.

8.3.2 Local –expatriate discourses – re-positioning knowledge-power

With a local manager now in charge of the education programme, the expectations from the expatriates were made more explicit:

I went to Khorog and had long conversation with X and Y separately. Let the past go, let’s focus on the future. I told them what were my approaches and what was required from X. I wanted to move ahead with institutional development and wanted a month-by-month plan about what was going to be done...it was a two hour discussion. X did not like it (AYMPMZ).

The issues went much deeper than simply personal preferences however, and might be best described as cracks appearing in the hegemonic discourse. The myth that the expatriates’ knowledge was superior to local knowledge and therefore automatically entitled them to leadership positions was being questioned. The expertise of the expatriates had come under scrutiny during my first field visit (2004) as well:

You know, the good expatriates, they come but they don’t stay..they look at how things are and they go. And now I don’t know..either the expatriates level is not so good..or perhaps we are getting better..perhaps both (with hands demonstrating the ‘we’ moving upwards and the expatriates moving downwards) (AYWMZ).

It is possible that AKF focused too strongly on expertise in implementation rather than in experience on governance and management. Be that as it may, the response to the expatriates was more nuanced than a total rejection of them however:

The expatriates were helpful in setting up the programme but experience of later expat staff showed with others there is not deep contribution by the expatriates. When the programmes is up and running and is in the middle there is a need for expatriates on short-term consultants. At IPD let's say, they were good at the beginning of the programme for building skills etc. Now more effective way is short-term consultancies. (AMYPMZ).

International development discourses, structures and practices were now being effectively used to hold expatriates accountable to local management (rather than to each other) for the sharing of their expertise. Their contribution to local knowledge continued to be acknowledged and valued, but the expatriates themselves were now metaphorically – and literally – put in their proper place. Their knowledge no longer gave them automatic entitlement to hold positions of power. As I argue in the next chapter (section 9.5), this re-positioning, underscores Gramsci's thesis of the 'organic intellectuals' creating a counter hegemonic discourse from within the hegemonic one.

Revised 'regimes of truth' under localisation allowed for a more open discussion on the value of the expatriates. Predictably enough given the neo-liberal nature of the international development discourses, the cost of expatriates in relation to their expertise was now more overtly challenged:

But you know now I analyse the budgets 2003, 2004 and this budget 60% was management salary. What is (it) that management did? Maybe the plan was wrong. Now, 2005 budget we spent 94% of allocated budget and only 6% is salary (IYMFMA).

They had money but they didn't have experts who could manage this money. For example the budget management, for example programme managers..... (IYMFMA)

And in an oblique comment on the fact that the expatriates were not indispensable:

Now there are no expatriates, but we are still working (IOMDJ).

Indeed, the AKDN, and the West, are no longer the only channels for exposure to the outside world:

Also, it's not only from the West. We met people from Moscow through the USAID work, and we learnt many things from them (AYMPMZ).

Local and former Soviet Union experience and expertise is being re-valued again. While this could be interpreted as a re-orientation towards Moscow, what is being argued for is a breadth of exposure to the international education experience that includes that of other Former Soviet Union countries which is more relevant to the Badakhshani experience of post-Soviet transition. Another important milestone in IPD's growth was the creation of a five year strategic plan.

8.3.3 Participatory approaches: 'Now we have our own Strategy!'

In the absence of a long – term strategy in 2004, IPD had experienced the vicissitudes of donor funding and their short-term, often short-sighted foci on education. As one IPD senior staff aptly commented:

Yes. We talked.... I talked with Malim Juma all the time that we need, we need to know the direction. We can't just work with donors. For example, today one donor will fund this. We working with this, we spent the money. After this, after two years, come with another donor, so funding only Vanj and Darvaz (two districts in Badakhshan). But what about the quality? What about the policy? What about the all education side? What is about the quality? What about the kids? One day they are working with one method, another day they are working with another method. There is also confusion. And what will happen? We should work another direction. We must think. Will we have teachers in 2030 or 2040? And what will be IPD after 10-15 years? Maybe we are not wrong, maybe we are not right. Maybe, I think, the strategy will change. The

issues after two years, maybe it will change, but still we have that vision (IYMFMA).

This comment demonstrated further significant new learning within IPD. The institution was gaining a strong sense of itself. In 2004 it was felt that all such matters were an AKF responsibility. Now the argument being made was for a clear direction to be set that was coherent, consistent, long-term and not donor-driven. The degree to which development discourses were now being used was also revealing, as was the strong sense of taking charge of their own local agendas:

Yes, at that time we were totally dependent on AKF. Difference now is that the strategy, it's not top – down but bottom – up, so everyone is consulted and has had a hand in it, the staff, even the district directors, even Oblano (Regional Education Department) (IYWDDA).

Epistemologically, this approach was more in line with how learning happens in this culture, that is, through an oral, demonstration-oriented and repetitive pedagogy:

Now we know. We did it ourselves. We can do the model; we can defend it even...yes as staff and as institution now. We know (IYWDDN).

The language of participation and self- directed development is clear, as is the confidence over internalising new learning. The shift in discourse is considerable from that in 2004. The process this time was more attuned not just to local agendas, but also to local epistemologies as well. More importantly, the locally generated strategy was seen as having significance as a vision and was a response to constantly changing donor agendas. This was IPD's direction, created within the institution albeit with the help of an expatriate intern (not an institutional development specialist or a senior programme manager) and endorsed by the AKDN authorities in Geneva. Reservations were still voiced:

We have a strategy now, but still it is overloaded. We do two models in one year. I would like to do it step by step, but it is squeezed in. So there is no teacher support. What are they learning, then? They are pulled out six times; pulled out for

different programmes in one year but training is similar, so how are they really equipped? (IOWPMU).

You have strategy, but, for example, weather can push back strategy. And a government timetable means it is impossible to do anything. But strategy makes your job clear. I mean, you know where you are going (AOWSG).

But, the critique is a reflexive one, offered from a position of mastery of the concept far different from the earlier 'AKF does all that for us' (Chapter 7, section 7.4). It comes from recognition of the inevitable gap between plans and ground realities. The point was not that the strategy was perfect, but that there was a pride and a sense of collegiality in having done it and agreed it together. The process had been coordinated by an expatriate, but his/her task had been to pull it together rather than to present it to the IPD as a *fait accompli* or a directive. Despite the reservations, the sense of achievement was unmistakable, and it was the participatory nature of the process rather than the content of the strategy that was valued. It was the fact of having – and owning – a direction that was important. Knowledge acquisition was not the only area in which IPD demonstrated powerful agency. It also gained a measure of economic control, well beyond that of the transfer of budgets and engagement with the donor community.

8.3.4 Funding crisis and entrepreneurship: Logos

As noted in the last chapter, (see section 7.4) IPD funding was running out in 2005 and the IPD had simply expected to be absorbed in another AKDN agency. As I had suspected, this did not happen.¹⁶³ For a while, IPD faced the spectre of returning to pre – AKF intervention days, staff attrition, and salary cuts. Although localisation of senior AKF and IPD positions had resulted in some savings, these

¹⁶³ The mandates did not quite fit with the other educational agencies, but I think, more to the point was that they did not want to absorb a full complement of sixty staff and then find that they had to fund their salaries, which were already higher than those of other local AKDN staff.

were not enough. The AKDN provided bridging funds for another year to give IPD time to rebuild its funding base.¹⁶⁴

The situation focused minds at the IPD and AKF, and Logos, an income-generating agency, was established at the end of 2005: an innovative move towards financial autonomy and long-term sustainability. Initially set up as a printing house, Logos had, in less than a year, begun to offer fee-attracting classes to the community (students and adult learners) in English and Mathematics and now even sciences,¹⁶⁵ drawing on the IPD and other specialists from the community on a percentage payment basis. It already is able to carry the IPD salaries for a couple of months if necessary.¹⁶⁶ The idea was not new. IPD and AKF had, in my time, on occasion explored such possibilities, and other local entrepreneurs had set up small English language teaching businesses. However, nothing on the scale of Logos had been possible at that time given the difficulty of procuring and servicing equipment as well as insufficient demand.

The setting up of an entrepreneurial, service delivery organisation in a context that until 15 years ago considered private enterprise as a totally undesirable capitalist activity is in itself an interesting phenomenon. What is even more significant is the combination of structures under which it has been established. Logos is a registered NGO on the one hand and has government representatives on its board to that effect. Yet its function is to generate income for another public entity, the IPD that provides a public service to the schools and education system of Badakhshan but which looks to donor funding to do so.

¹⁶⁴ Conversation with the new CEO as he was getting ready to go to the regular year – end board meeting with the central AKDN committee and His Highness (file note: Nov 2005).

¹⁶⁵ Fifteen years into the transition to capitalism, there is enough cash circulating in the economy for people to be able to afford such services. The Aga Khan Lycee, despite its shaky start, is now struggling to meet the demand for places.

¹⁶⁶ When one considers that the organisation has been set up and run by ex-communist educators thought to be at sea with respect to entrepreneurial initiatives because of seventy years of communist rule, it is a sobering reflection on the dangers of superficial generalisations about a community.

8.3.5 Local discourses continued: professional development

Localisation did not end contestations: it simply re-focused them, making visible the operation of informal institutional rules that governed practices. Predictably enough, management style, professional development and hiring practices and came under close scrutiny. The analysis was incisive:

Yes, its senior management's joint decision, but if I am head and I say, " We need a new person for such and such position do you know anyone? I know someone and s/he is very good, what do you think?" Then deputies will not oppose. So they are consulted but... (IYWDDA).

Change and the use of agency, it seems, is an on-going process. The local hegemonies also carry with them their nascent challenges. It remains to be seen how these are dealt with in the future.

While the overall IPD strategy refers to human resource development and to capacity building, there is no systematic, yearly professional development plan that is known to all. Its absence allows the suspicion that professional development is still used to reward those who comply with senior management and to ignore those who do not, to persist:

If you are my friend, yes, I will look after you and I will give you professional development. Or if I am useful to you, for example I know someone important or something. But if not, then just forgetting me! (IOWPU).

References to hiring practices are nuanced, and are not directly challenged by local staff. The relationships between volunteers and senior management are quietly but pointedly referred to during my visit. Volunteering at IPD is coveted since it provides access to the internet, good educational material, computers and experts. The allusion to nepotism is clear if indirect, and there is some reservation over whether the processes are truly transparent or simply rubber-stamping exercises (IYWLRCN, IYWYEMN).

Sudden shifts in who leads which programmes, and who is suddenly moved on to other work while new people are brought in who are known to have some relationship with senior management, arouse scepticism about due process being adhered to. Localisation also facilitated the resurrection of a hierarchical approach in management that restricted the circulation of information within IPD:

When X was here, we knew everything: s/he copied everything to everyone and discussed it. Now we are told the decisions. Programme leaders are not always consulted (AOWSG).

To be honest, I don't know why T is in that team. They don't discuss it with us (IYWEMN).

The local hierarchy is seldom challenged collectively or openly:

If we query why, then they say "I don't know". P and Q said. "it has to be like this." I said, "But who is P and Q? I need to know why the right things are not here" (IYWN).

If you speak in meeting and say something like criticize then they don't like it. They say, "Why you said like that in meeting? Come and tell me directly" (IOWDG).

Contestation is not absent altogether, however, and there is recognition that its manifestation is also a part of the change process.

But s/he too has grown a lot in these years. Now you can discuss. S/he does not like it, but then s/he thinks about it (IWYDDA).

The analysis is sharp and to the point, cutting through the notion of 'transparent' structures to reveal how clan¹⁶⁷ networks play a role in how local people are hired or positioned within organisations.

In this regard there has always been some ambivalence towards localisation

¹⁶⁷ See Schatz (2004) for more on how the state institutions has contributed to the strengthening of kinship-based clan networks by giving them added meaning through infusing them within modern social and political institutions.

(AOWPU; AOWSG;). There is a residual feeling amongst some that the expatriates, by their very ignorance of local relationships¹⁶⁸, facilitate a more open management (IOWSG) and ensure a degree of transparency that is difficult to achieve at local level. As with much else in this study, this reservation about localisation reveals yet another complexity in the topography of the local-expatriate discourse: the data points to more than one perspective on the issue.¹⁶⁹

On the other hand, it must be stated that in a close-knit, small community the chances of being related are obviously greater. Clan obligations are very real and very important and what might seem like nepotism to Western eyes is seen differently in other cultures as legitimately helping out clan members and strengthening reciprocal clan responsibilities (Hyden (2003)¹⁷⁰. However, the reservations are not totally confined to local hiring practices: local people were equally frank in pointing out the expatriate networks that led to a job or an internship in Badakhshan (LOWIG; iYWDDA; AYMPMZ).

In examining informal institutions, Hyden (2003) maintains that they:

.. foster pragmatism: the idea of being able to cope with and adapt to shifting conditions over which people have little control. Informal institutions claim their validity in the local arena where the effects of reciprocal exchanges can be seen and evaluated. Formal institutions are based on rights and challenge authority

¹⁶⁸ During my time there, local people were most reluctant to be involved in the allocation of AKF scholarships, even when there were expatriates on the panel. The pressure on them from the community was intense, and they would rather not be subject to it, even when the process was totally transparent with each panel member awarding their own marks and candidates being chosen according to scores without discussion unless scores were evenly divided for any one particular candidate. It was always a matter of debate amongst us as to how local people could become accountable to themselves without resorting to the expatriates, although we recognised that the scholarships carried enormous weight in this region and that they were run on criteria that were externally derived.

¹⁶⁹ 'Clans' here are understood to be family kinship relationships of obligation and reciprocity that obtain within faith and beyond faith.

¹⁷⁰ When humanitarian assistance was targeted to focus on the very poor in a village the AKF found that people still distributed that equally amongst themselves. When asked why an old woman said 'when its winter and I need someone to help me with firewood it won't be you who will be here but my fellow villagers' (MYMDY)

without fear: informal ones strengthen loyalty (Hyden 2003 p. 28).

The rule of informal institutions notwithstanding, local people are now more discerning of their informal institutional practices.

Localisation transferred responsibility and power to the local educators, but also inevitably facilitated the reinforcement of the networking relationships that characterise informal institutions and can override transparency or merit at the local level. Tension arises from the fact that the IPD staff have experienced different types of management: facilitative, coercive and local. They are now in a position to interrogate and occasionally to resist the reappearance of a local hegemony. In that sense there is no possibility of a return to pre-transition times. Contentions over programme implementation are still common, but now the responses are different, as the next section demonstrates.

8.3.6 Programme management

As in 2004, the overloading and endless repetition of programme activities has continued to cause frustration. If staff did not leave, it was only because there were few other job opportunities (IYMEMN; AYWMZ; IOMEMS; (IYMEMNF). There is no time to experiment with new ideas and approaches and this is both stifling innovation and affecting motivation

We do the same thing again and again and there is not time to change or do anything new. I'm tired of it, and not learning anything new at all (AYWPU).

These comments are reminiscent of 2004, when it was felt that AKF was the constraining institution. Now it has been recognised that local senior IPD management can be just as rigid. Speaking about a senior staff member's insistence that training is replicated in exactly the same way with the same participants each time, a frustrated programme implementer declared:

But you can't have it the same. This one is ill. This one dies.
Let **me** tell the donors. Let **me** write and justify. This is life!
(AOWPU).

It is interesting that in this instance the response is not, 'Tell them I won't do it' (Chapter 7 section 7.3.1) but 'Let **me** tell them.' The growth in confidence is significant, both in the silent challenge to the person coordinating the programme, and in the conviction that actions could be justified to donors. As well as these more frustrating continuities from 2004, there were other aspects of how the IPD was run in 2004 that were being re-visited in 2006.

8.3.7 Structures revived?

AKF is seeking to revive the planning and operational structures that had been set up through the IPD charter but which had been allowed to atrophy from 2004 onwards (Section 2.1). There is a move to restore the formal interface and accountability between AKF and IPD and other stakeholders through the various committees under the charter, in order to counterbalance the current more informal arrangements (AYMPMZ). The divisive 'core staff /non core staff' distinction is also being brought back, since IPD is still struggling to secure sufficient donor funding. Staff are being encouraged to learn English through tying competency in it to the performance appraisal system. The Logos charter has also been revised and it now has financial targets to meet. The expectations are that in about ten years it may enable IPD to become totally self sustaining.

While it could be argued that this revival of structures introduced by AKF is inevitable and that incoming local senior management is simply replicating what it has learnt, I would posit that this is a local response to dominant global development discourses. English is vital for access to better knowledge and hence to capacity building. Transparency and accountability have to be demonstrated in a language that the international agencies can comprehend, and the fickleness of donor funding necessitates a contingency plan in which core programmes – and hence core staff – may have to be retained while others have

less security of employment. What is worth noting is that, unlike in the past, Logos now offers a potentially secure source of funding in the long-term. The IPD has moved a long way from the survival mode it was cast in after the civil war, through being rescued and developed, to gaining greater autonomy, not just from government but also from AKF.

As noted above while imposed institutional structures can to some degree be circumvented by traditional informal institutional structures, it is no longer possible, once the encounter has occurred, to revert to the pre-encounter situation. There is, instead, a fusion of the old and the new which has now become a part of the local repertoire of strategies for institutional building. What IPD seems to be struggling with is how to replace first Soviet and then Eurocentric, formal institutional structures and find indigenous institutional forms that are developmental (Hyden 2003). In the area of programme design and programme implementation, it has acquired sound expertise and has experimented with a variety of approaches.

8.3.8 Programmatic expertise

Timeline 3 below illustrates the programmatic shifts and developments at the IPD. The institution is both more pragmatic as well as more reflexive in its work, incorporating innovation while seeking to maintain a degree of universal coverage albeit with less intensity in all districts.

| Year | Details |
|-----------|--|
| Pre 1996 | Down-graded to an office Not much activity because of lack of resources* |
| 1996-1998 | AKF-IPD Phase 1 consensual relationship Some school inspections Production of a region-wide newsletter with AKF help Production of some notes for teachers on physics, chemistry |
| 1999-2000 | AKF-IPD Phase 2 closer partnerships Intensive training and follow up work in 4 of 8 districts on: Pedagogy School management Community mobilisation through parent committees Development of a 'key teacher' implementation structure serving satellite schools in their sub-districts (on-site training)** New education management position at IPD created Capacity building at IPD |
| 2000-2002 | AKF-IPD closer partnership: transfer of implementation to IPD In addition to above: Expanded into 2 more districts, Intensive pedagogy training through key teacher structure and IPD workshops. School management and community mobilisation for all districts Experimentation with a mobile resource centre for on-site training and resources to schools in 1 district. |
| 2003-2004 | AKF-IPD grantor-grantee relationship In addition to above, and the key teacher structure: Development and piloting of the Whole School Improvement Programme:*** (SIP) 18 core schools serving 36 cluster schools selective coverage in all districts Teaching/Learning resources provided to the rest of the schools Monitoring and evaluation unit set up at IPD Learning resource centres (LRCs) created in some schools IPD-AKF grantor-grantee relationship under localisation. |
| 2005 | Extension of SIP to cover 56 schools directly Development of long-term strategy at IPD till 2011 Curriculum enrichment frameworks created to support teachers. Frameworks endorsed and adopted nationally. LRCs expanded to cover all schools |
| 2006 | Coverage of all 316 schools by SIP planned. 15 new core schools with 3-4 cluster schools to be added each year for 3 years. Core schools need 3 year inputs. Region-wide by 2011 216 schools covered by the key teacher structure A base line study on programme impact set up at IPD |

Timeline 3: IPD programmatic development

* The IPD was mandated to up-grade each of the 5,000 teachers in the system, once in 5 years and did so through training courses. The post-Soviet transition and the civil war had meant a suspension of all activities. When I arrived in 1998 the IPD only produced a newsletter as support to teachers. They needed AKF support with transport to get to schools in the districts and their work plans essentially reflected the work done by AKF in which their specialists participated

** The Key Teacher structure decentralises the professional development system and enables teachers in remote areas to access professional growth opportunities locally and to be supported in the classroom throughout the year. In terms of delivery of trainings, the key teacher structure has continued to lie at the core of the education programme.

*** The whole school improvement package includes capacity building initiatives in the areas of teaching/learning methodologies, school management capacity improvement, enhancing educators' skills in curriculum resource development and mentoring. The strategy is to focus on a set of 'core schools' which get the intensive training and support in all areas. They, in turn, service 3-4 'satellite schools' to whom they extend similar support albeit at a less intensive level.

Appendix 3 highlights some developments in 2009. Internal contestations, programmatic capability and changes notwithstanding, how does the IPD now relate to government?

8.4 Relationships with government: IPD recast

There is a tension in the regional government in Badakhshan between the desire to see a revitalised IPD and the need to keep it within the government's sphere of influence. The AKF's focus on the IPD gave it a strong financial and technical base ('material base' in Badakhshani, or perhaps Marxist language) that very quickly raised the calibre and level, and hence the status, of its staff and its work, while the Regional Education Department remained less directly engaged.

What had been described earlier as the AKF staff's elitist attitude to government (Chapter 7, section 7.2.2.4) surfaced as a tacit critique of IPD by other education officials in the education system. While beneficiaries were complementary about the IPD, the Regional Education Department had often voiced concern that AKF had not worked as directly with it as well. This was put to me in the form of a question by the then (2004) Regional Education Director:

Tell me, I know you no longer work for AKF, but was there not a provision to work with the Regional Education Department in the same way as your plan? Why is it not happening?¹⁷¹ Now it's like everyone is climbing the same mountain by different routes (GOMRD).

The IPD's growing autonomy, based on increasing economic power, was not going unchallenged. Localisation and investment in the institution had considerably raised the stakes for control, power and economic privilege within the education sector, especially between the Regional Education Department and IPD.¹⁷² A previous RED was more forthright. In answer to the question, 'If you could have advised AKF to do things differently, what would you have asked them to change?' He offered me the following critique of my work there:

You should have worked with Oblano (the Regional Education Department) first. You did not and it is still not happening even today. You worked with IPD and with schools. But not with Oblano. I think you should have started with the Oblano and the Raynos (districts). We have methodologist offices but you did not work with them. You started from the middle, not the head or the feet: the top level of the system or the kindergarten, but the middle part: the stomach of the system (OMREDS).

Although the response was contextualised as an issue of selective intervention versus system – wide initiatives and pointed out as a strategic error on AKF's

¹⁷¹ That had indeed been the intention when I left the AKF. IPD had its own institutional development specialist to steer it through the shift from partner to grantee, and the education programme officer was supposed to focus on developing the RED. But this did not happen, and while I was not told why this was so, anecdotal evidence pointed to the fact that the AKF programme manager simply did not want to stay in Khorog to do this, rather than be based in Dushanbe.

¹⁷² The power relationships at play here had been recognised early by IPD itself. Autonomy for a government organisation had not been easily attained, as noted in Chapter 7 section 7.2.2.2¹⁷²

part, the underlying issue was that of the Regional Education Department feeling sidelined. IPD has to some extent unquestionably overtaken the RED.¹⁷³ In speaking of the IPD's achievements and history with respect to its new charter the same respondent had said:

Given the advantages that it has, the IPD should have done a lot more. It has a very strong material base now, but its programmes are still lacking. It had said it would provide.... and it has not (OMREDS).

The list of things that IPD had not done pointed to it having overlooked the Regional Education Department's priorities in its work. There was a tacit concern that the institution could become self-serving and forget its roots, that the 'stomach' would simply be content to feed itself, feel full and forget the rest of the body.

While the underlying feeling of being 'outside of' or 'outstripped by' IPD no doubt played a part in this respondent's perceptions, some of what was being implied was evidently true. As noted in Chapter 7 section 7.3.4 and Chapter 8 section 8.3.3 IPD's increasing dependence on donors for funding resulted in its entrapment into meeting donor agendas at the expense of both its own strategic direction and indeed the needs of the system. The IBET grant was a case in point, where funding was available for strengthening education at the primary level only, and which also stipulated work beyond the region. (IBET 2004).

Increasingly, IPD was moving away from the egalitarian discourse of the early reform agenda towards a more capitalist approach. Programmatic activities reflected the fact that it no longer served the whole region equally, but focused greater energies selectively as timeline 3 above illustrates, on schools (whole school improvement programmes) and district staff (capacity building of key

¹⁷³ This was by no means peculiar to the IPD. Reeves (2004) notes a similar tension between the fledgling Kyrgyz-American Faculty (later the American University of Kyrgyzstan) and its parent National University of Kyrgyzstan.

teachers, key head teachers and methodologists). The egalitarian discourse was now replaced by the donor-driven, pragmatic discourse of selectivity of support (IPD 1998-2006) and includes operations outside the region although IPD's mandate is a regional one. And this created some unease at the regional government level.¹⁷⁴

In speaking about government IPD staff saw them as hindering their work (LIMOK), making unreasonable or unrealistic demands (AOWSG) or not respecting their time:

They say they are coming, and then we wait a whole day, and then they don't come and no explanation (AOMK).

and essentially delegating their responsibilities to the IPD:

We do all their work (IOMDJ).

As noted in Chapter 7 section 7.2.2.4, during integration into the IPD of the local AKF staff they carried with them the discourse of the progressive, competent, professional who could deliver effective educational innovations. The IPD seems to have picked up this discourse in re-inventing itself. Now, it is the IPD that sees the government as ineffective bureaucrats who can no longer really meet their obligations to the citizens (AOWGS; OMDJ; IYWLRCN).

This was not a discourse generated by AKF alone, however. Central government lost much credibility after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and also because it is now seen as being self-serving rather than protecting the citizen's rights. On the other hand, at the centre, there is a sense in which the Badakhshanis are set apart by their language, ethnicity, faith and the fact that they sided with the opposition during the civil war. There is, too, a feeling, despite its presence at the

¹⁷⁴ Respondents referred to how government would suddenly ask for IPD representation and IPD could not comply because staff was out in other regions and the government would then get annoyed and demand to know why they were working out of the region. (LIWOS)

centre that the AKDN and the Aga Khan are looking after their own in Badakhshan (DeCordier 2008). The AKDN's presence has been used to cut Badakhshan out of monies given to the government by the World Bank, and other international agencies, on the grounds that their needs are met by the AKDN.¹⁷⁵

8.5 The AKDN reviewed

So how *does* the community now view the AKDN? Given all that has changed since the arrival of the network, only some of which is captured in the previous two chapters and this one, (there were changes, also, in how humanitarian assistance was distributed, in the introduction of user fees for health services and the introduction of micro credit schemes for entrepreneurs, farmers, market sellers) it is not surprising that the view of what AKDN represents has changed over time.

In the immediate aftermath of the Imam's visit, the community viewed his institutions with a reverence that was new to the rest of us working within it. But the experience of working with and within the institutions inevitably changed that initial vision of the AKDN. Those who later worked with AKF remembered:

When I was outside it I was not sure I was worthy of working there (AOWSG).

However, as early as 1996 there were diverging opinions about how the AKDN did its work, as Keshavjee's thesis attests. Speaking about the reservations of some members of the community over the employment of ex – communists within the AKDN, Keshavjee (1998) states:

Because AKF and AKDN more or less represent the Imam, their perceived role in Badakhshan is conflated with the leadership role that many hope the Imam will fulfil, and to a

¹⁷⁵ I remember having to lobby to secure Badakhshan's share of World Bank funds for textbooks and furniture (2000). As late as 2006, the IPD was also having to make a strong case to receive its share of the fast track initiative funds on education.

large degree they are held to a higher ethical standard than other NGOs (Keshavjee 1998 Chapter 2 p. 76).

To this day, despite the criticisms of the AKDN, there is a sense in which the institutions are still regarded as somehow representing the Imam, so that even the Aga Khan School is expected to perform better than other schools not only because it is well resourced and its staff well trained but because

They have to keep the name of the Imam high (AWOSG).

In the minds of many who have had to come to terms with the less-than-perfect AKDN, this was dealt with through a distancing of the Imam and his institutions.¹⁷⁶ The Regional Education Director, quizzing me about AKF backtracking on its plans to work with the RED, said:

The Imam works at the strategic level, but these little things we have to sort out amongst ourselves (GOMRD).

And the following testimony is quoted at length because it makes a series of salient points in relation to the AKF, IPD and the faith perspective:

When I was out of AKF, I had different interpretation of it. I felt and thought of something super power ruling inside AAKF institution. But when I entered it myself, I saw that it was not different from all institutions in general, though the structure and culture were different. The difference was the flexibility in terms of plans and implementations, taking risks in actions and implementations, providing learning environment at work, people helping each other and friendly attitude from the bosses and everyone. Feeling responsibilities and commitments from all staff. To see the bosses as real friends. And I thought that this was requirement of the Imam in his institutions. I didn't know about this style of managing. Before, I was in IED and it also belongs to Imam's institutions. I felt something unusual feeling in myself thinking would I be able to be worth to work in this institution? Would I been able to carry all the requirements in humanity, humility, honesty, trustworthy? In general would I

¹⁷⁶ One could argue that this is a necessary tension in all faiths between reason and faith. The Badakhshani community in some senses is becoming more nuanced in their appreciation of the many facets of the relationship between development and faith, the secular AKDN agencies and the religious figure who heads them.

be able to keep the prestige of the institution and the status of HIS HIGHNESS? (AOWSG emphasis in original).

This statement underscores, once again, how lack of exposure can result in attributing qualities to the AKDN (see Chapter 7) that are, in fact, common management practices. The strength of feeling when those in charge did not meet the expectations, not of a development agency but of what was seen as an Imamati institution is evident in following testimony:

I was very proud to work with AKF. For me, money and salary was not as important as the image of working with AKF. Even ID card of AKF employee that I kept, meant a lot for me. Gradually things changed. may be from my point of view but I saw conflicts unprofessionalism among the AKF expatriates (among those that I thought of to be the most devotees to Aga-Khan and its institutions as they had more exposure and experiences working with HIS HIGHNESS institutions and policies). Then I lost some my previous motivation and enthusiasm that I have had. I was thinking then that if those people come and work just for their own interests, then my effort doesn't make changes. It was not looking like Imamat institution for about 2-3 years in 2004-2006 (AOWSG).

What is evident is that it is those who staff and serve the AKDN are seen as less than they should be: the Imam's image remains untainted. Yet even as the AKDN is critiqued and people struggle with its inconsistencies in their minds, there is a religious element in their relationship with it. Speaking of the changes in the community, a head teacher remarked:

People now work in their farms and the bazaar. It is 'aib' (a mixture of shame and loss of honour) to take from the Imam all the time. We must give some 'zakat' (metaphorical reference to the religious tithe obligatory but never enforced on all Muslims) back too (SMOHTP).

Reflecting on an AKDN institution where she was offered a job, another member of the community told me:

I can't work there. They don't work properly in the Imam's institution. Then I could not see this and keep quiet. Better to

keep far from that. The Imam will provide for me another way (LWOBN).

Here, it is interesting how her notion of the Imam's concrete help in terms of institutional opportunities is complemented by belief in his spiritual role of being the provider of sustenance. From within the IPD the focus is on accountability:

You know the government see NGOs differently. I mean we ...we are more accountable because it is AKDN. But central government sees AKDN like other NGOs ... differently.... so I'm not sure about it...they just see the money, but for us it's different (LIWYD).DN)

Even challenges to the current hierarchy are framed in the religious perspective when it is felt that its higher accountability is not quite all that it might be:

This is the Imam's money that is why I wanted to know why the materials were different (IYWN).

Donor money is still seen as 'the Imam's money' because it is channelled through his institutions, not because of a lack of knowledge of funding sources but because of the broader awareness of the Aga Khan's role in the development of Badakhshan. This sense of accountability, over and above the usual accountability to donors, is corroborated by the previous CEO of AKF:

We are accountable to the Imam and to the community. Who are these other NGOs accountable to? (EYMCEO).

as well as the current one, as reported by one respondent:

He said it was really, really hard to ask (the Imam) for the bridging funds for another year (LAYMPM).

This perhaps is one of the outcomes of the interaction of a faith-inspired institution at work within a same-faith constituency. Accountability here lies in the relationship of the spiritual leader and his community rather than the in the usual development terms. It is a fair point to ask whether the AKDN would have been present in Tajikistan if the population of Badakhshan has not been Ismaili. And one wonders how differently would development in Badakhshan have proceeded if there had been no AKDN to mediate it?

Despite the very tangible, organisational issues within IPD and AKF that have formed the subject of the last two chapters, the special relationship between the AKDN and the community still holds. The religious or axiological link that the community continues to make between the AKDN and the Imam is not far from their consciousness, even as their perspectives of the nature of that link is refined on the basis of institutional engagement. The image of the Imam is now held distinct and separate from his institutions: these and the people who work within them may come in for criticism, but the figure of the Imam is above reproach.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter highlights what can now be termed the transformative encounter of the IPD and the AKF as it entered yet another phase that saw the emergence of a counter hegemony to the situation described in Chapter 7. Both Foucauldian and Gramscian notions of power were at work in the individual resistance and the development of the organic intellectuals that made it possible to localise AKF operations. That event was transformative in that it facilitated a change in the position of the local actors with respect to the expatriates. It also allowed the IPD to drive its own development, through taking control of its own finances and the setting up of an entrepreneurial arm, Logos. Arguably, the IIPD is leading the way to a hybrid NGO that blends public service with income – generating enterprises. Be that as it may, this reinvention of itself has changed how the transformed IPD now sees itself and its relationships to regional and national government. Educational change has now come to mean a complex process of learning, of resisting, of reinventing and of re-assessing the meaning of development and that of faith-inspired development in particular. The next chapter takes up these issues and analyses their implications.

Chapter 9: Discussion and conclusion: Change and exchange

9.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the empirical findings of this thesis and seeks to explain them. The discussion draws on the theoretical understanding of educational change in the Former Soviet Union in relation to transition, international aid and development, including institutional development, linked to faith perspectives outlined in Chapter 3. It relates these understandings to the findings in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. It begins by looking at the theoretical understandings of educational change available so far on post-Soviet transition and the international community's interventions, to frame the institutional transition of the IPD. Focusing on institutional change and the change agents within it, the analysis links the macro frameworks of national policies, structures and systems to the more human world of those educators who are both the agents and the subjects of change and, in their professional and personal lives, are in various stages of transition themselves. And finally it takes into account the very central position of faith in these Muslim societies.

9.2 International aid discourses and hegemonies

The hegemonic discourses of international aid have been analysed in culture-sensitive and context –sensitive scholarship from the international and comparative education and development fields (see Chapter 3 section 3.3). Such analysis has focused on the unqualified transfer of educational concepts from the West (Crossley and Watson 2003; Crossley 2004; Crossley et.al 2007; Crossley 2008); the standardisation of education through globalised discourses of millennium development goals (Chabbott, 2003; Odora-Hoppers, 2000; Tomask, 2004); the 'aculturised' economisation of aid and of development (Martinussen 1997; Stephens 2007), and the caution that when concepts 'travel' they do not do so in a vacuum and may shed as well as accrue different nuances and meanings, (Heathershaw, 2007) all seek to identify factors that explain why international aid

and development efforts remain only partially successful. They unmask the various hegemonic discourses of international aid, driven by the neo-liberal agendas in the nineties and more recently by issues of security (see Chapter 3), that make real change for the better difficult or development aid not very effective.

The disregard to context and to culture was accentuated in the response to the aid needs of the Former Soviet Union. Standard reform packages for all post – Soviet countries (Silova and Steiner-Khamsi, 2008) forced Tajikistan to reduce school leaving ages to comply with international norms without regard to context and histories. The IMF conditionalities included rationalisation reforms that meant that remote valleys in Badakhshan would have lost provision if the region had not been able to argue successfully that its topography necessitated provision in remote valleys. Economic necessities introduced ideas of streaming children early into ‘mathematics’ and ‘humanities’ focused education. Those who could pay user fees were able to progress beyond the compulsory 12 year schooling. Universal tertiary education was a thing of the past. To what must have seemed like the vicissitudes of international perspectives which focused on ‘basic’ education in a system that had well-developed secondary and vocational education, was added the piece-meal approach that central government took to reforms. English, for example, was suddenly introduced at primary level without any training of teachers or materials: the assumption was that secondary English teachers had sufficient content knowledge to do the job. The introduction of Tajik as a medium of instruction meant that Badakhshani children attended a ‘zero class’ for a year to gain proficiency in Tajik before entering grade 1.

The development project assumed ‘improvement’ ‘building up’ as its starting point and had not worked from - or on - how to prevent or arrest the decline of an existing, good system. In education this translated into a focus on provision and on access usually at primary level rather than on quality and relevance. Yet Badakhshanis already had provision and access to good primary and secondary education relatively speaking (see chapter 2, section 2.3). Their issues were how to prevent the erosion of quality and relevance, and how to stem the loss of

provision and personnel from the system. Educational change meant trying to keep pace with a set of rapid, piecemeal set of reforms from national government and internal contestations over educational transformation at the institutional level.

9.3 Institutional development: the IPD

The international hegemonic discourses were evident in the early conversations between the AKDN and the broader community of Badakhshani educators recorded in this study. Contestations over what donors would fund and what local educators felt was needed (chapter 6, section 6.5) echoed some of the challenges identified above. The AKDN management styles and practices formed yet another hegemony: that of the expert expatriate which manifested itself in the encounters between the AKF and the IPD.

9.3.1 Knowledge power and resistance

The IPD-AKF encounter involved multiple discourses at work. The processes of institutional transformation involved capacity building, changes in operational and institutional structures and management practices. It generated hegemonies and counter hegemonies, dependency, localisation and empowerment.

Chapter 7 reveals a number of what Foucault terms, 'discursive practices' both local and global at play at the IPD. These are reflected in the position of the expatriates and their knowledge of the international aid discourses, as well as in the structural and operational changes introduced at the IPD to transform it from a Soviet –style government organisation to one that could be internationally recognised. Foucauldian 'regimes of truth' advocated the discursive practices of international development at the strategic, funding and programme development level through the grantor-grantee relationship. They sanctioned and normalised

management practices at the operations level, (through the core staff/non-core staff policies, expatriate leadership of all programmes as well as programme implementation and reporting rules. In Foucauldian terms, the relational aspect of power dictated who had the authority to 'speak' and whose knowledge was legitimised and what was silenced. This obscured from the IPD its own importance while emphasising that of the AKF. It also concealed the possibility of exploring institutional forms that could be developmental. (Hyden, 2008). The true degree of symbiosis in the IPD-AKF relationship and the option of alternative ways of institutionalising change were revealed only after localisation. But it was not just the dominant discourse that prevailed. The 'subjugated knowledges (Ball 2006) found expression in resistance as well as in acquiring new literacies (Apple 2004).

The struggle over report-writing, the contestations over the design of implementation strategies and the concern with the lack of innovation, all attest to how agency was exercised at the individual level by IPD staff. Foucauldian uses of power manifested themselves in various acts of resistance as well as the acquisition of knowledge-power. The micro-technologies of power and its circulation throughout a system were strongly present in the forms of diverse forms of resistance that individuals resorted to. Informal institutional networks (extended family relationships, reciprocal exchange of favours or services and activating hierarchical status power) were used to circumvent formal ones. The space offered by the rules was manoeuvred to advantage and staff also engaged in the simple acts of avoidance and biding one's time. They took the opportunity afforded by new expatriates who came on board with little orientation and institutional history behind them to allow certain committee structures to lapse. Even the use of this research to voice dissent constituted a form of resistance.

Resistance went hand-in-hand with new learning. As I observed (Chapter 8.sections 8.2 and 8.3) the IPD was not merely gaining 'functional' literacy in understanding 'donor-speak' but 'powerful literacy' (Apple 2004 see section 9.3.3) and, to paraphrase Ball, reclaiming its soul in spite of the technologies of performativity (Ball 2003). Hence, while the resistance might have manifested

itself at the individual level, the discourse of the expert expatriate was disintegrating as the quality of expertise was seen to decline,¹⁷⁷ unmasking the hegemony. There were still major areas of operation that IPD depended on AKF for: funding and strategic direction for instance in 2004. However, IPD staff's consciousness of their own capacities rose through the challenges to programmatic and implementation decisions that they mounted. In Gramsci's terms the 'subaltern' (the phrase has to be used with caution in referring to the highly qualified, Badakhshani educators), were ready to come into their own: it was the definitive event that was needed and the AKDN's localisation policy provided it.

9.3.2 The localisation of the AKF CEO position

If the AKF perpetuated its own hegemony of the expert expatriate, AKDN's overall development policies also contributed the formation of what, in Gramsci's terms might be termed the 'organic intellectuals' who subsequently subverted the hegemony from within. The policies of long-term engagement, capacity – building and localisation that distinguish AKDN's approach to development, facilitated the localisation process and provided the event that led to the breaking of the hegemony and the establishment of the counter-hegemony. The powerful literacies (Apple 2004) that the Badakhshanis had acquired by that time (2005) enabled them to appropriate the hegemonic discourses to their own uses as was evidenced in the re-positioning of the expatriates who now no longer led programmes but contributed to them through short-term consultancies. The counter hegemonic solution uses the standard, if sometimes disputed, space within international development aid structures: that of the short – term consultant. The strategy attests to the level of local sophistication that seeks to bring knowledge under the control of the local actors. Expatriates can contribute to that agenda if their role is defined as one of sharing their knowledge: and the

¹⁷⁷ In 2004 a participant had pointed out that either the quality of the expatriates was not as good or, perhaps, that they, the local staff were gaining more expertise. In 2006 there were several references to the expatriates being useful at the start up stage but not so productive once the programme was off the ground.

structures of development work – short term consultancies – provide the perfect vehicle for doing this. Agency, then, is evident in the way in which newly acquired structures are now used to meet specific local needs defined by local people on their terms. The setting up of Logos likewise was effected with donor funding by using the argument that it offers IPD a measure of sustainability beyond the aid agenda.

Foucault maintains that:

...relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated, nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse (Foucault, 1980:93).

And he appears to see the capacity for self-reflection as the site for the power to act for change and to resist, through local intervention and individual freedom, being co-opted into or subjected to dominant power discourses. Gramsci, also focuses on the importance of reflexivity or self-consciousness as a means of modifying ways of thinking but at the collective or group level. He maintains that resistance is turned to agency as it is collectivised, organised and led by the organic intellectuals from within the subaltern ranks (Gramsci 1971). Counter hegemonies can be transformative in that sense without being revolutionary or violent: the struggle is carried out at the cultural and intellectual sites as was the case with the IPD (Apple 2004). Both processes were at work in the AKF-IPD encounter in the participants' discussions of programme quality, the repetitive nature of implementation that discouraged experimentation and the critiques over both expatriate and then local leadership.

9.3.3 Multiple hegemonies

These processes at the IPD were framed, as noted, in an already existing meta – narrative: the transition to capitalism is itself a hegemonic discourse (Amsler 2007) in which Tajikistan as a nation as well as the AKF and IPD on the ground level are caught. The international development agenda permeates the work of

the AKF and the IPD through the donor requirements that they must engage with. AKF must deal with the contradiction of short-term donor funding in the knowledge that development is a long-term undertaking and the IPD staff's struggle with the processes of donor programming and reporting make startlingly visible the discourses they must learn (Mehbratu, Crossley and Johnson 2003; Silova and Steiner-Khamsi 2008).

To add to the complexity the AKF and IPD are also engaged in the institutional transformation of the IPD which in itself represents an ideological transformation from a soviet based educational institute to a semi-private, semi-autonomous in-service institution. In this process, the IPD encountered yet more discourses of 'managerial bourgeoisie' (Keshavjee 1998) at the micro levels that Foucault (1972; 1980) identifies: it counteracted these through the processes that Gramsci elaborates, in which the site of the struggle is cultural and intellectual and practical (Apple 2004). The expatriate – local relationships, both structurally and individually embodied these discourses. The 'regimes of truth' that circulated in 2004, obscured from the IPD the value of its local knowledge and networks, and the inter-dependent nature of its relationship with AKF which was so clearly articulated by it in 2006 simply as 'if no IPD then no AKF' (LIWYNAZ). As noted in chapter 7 and 8, IPD learning included not just technical mastery of pedagogical and programme design and delivery skills but also the learning of new discourses

At first the expatriates were helpful in building the programmes but once the programmes were running their contribution was not so useful (LMA PMZ0).

What was obscured from the AKF was the IPD's capacity for appropriation as well as resistance. They were acquiring what Apple terms as not just functional literacy or literacy as a life-skill, nor yet only moral literacy but:

..critical literacy, powerful literacy, political literacy which enables the growth of genuine understanding and control of all of the spheres of social life in which (we) participate' Apple 2004 p. 179).

Apple's connection of how knowledge must 'work' on the notion of reality to exercise power is apposite here. He draws on Fiske who maintains that knowledge must struggle in two ways to maintain power: first it must reduce reality to the 'knowable' which entails producing it as a discursive construct 'whose arbitrariness and inadequacies are disguised as far as possible' The second is to get that reality circulated as widely as possible as the truth by those whose interests may not be aligned with it (Fiske cited in Apple 2004 p.180). Apple goes on to say that while Fiske's language may be theoretical it does point to how power functions in our daily lives. Hence, the IPD became a site for the struggle for whose reality counted.

9.4 Faith discourses

And finally these are overlaid to some extent by the discourse of faith that links the AKDN with the Badakhshani community. That linkage differentiates their engagement from the usual NGO-constituent relationship towards one based on faith.

9.4.1 Communal responses to change: the place of faith

Chapter 6 describes the community's response to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the civil war and the arrival of the AKDN. The narrative follows Birzea's (1994) stages of responses (denial, paralysis, despair, acceptance and resolution) although the resolution is an on-going process. Between despair and acceptance, Birzea also identifies 'Krisis' as part of the transition process. A state which is both a 'melting point' as well as a turning point and which is:

...a decisive state of reappraisal, a moment of reflection, doubt and retrospective assessment (Birzea, 1994 p.18).

This process, he claims:

consists of the emergence of new collective meanings, the re-establishment of symbolic references and the reconstruction of institutional foundations is part of what can already be called the culture of transition (ibid).

Birzea does not elaborate on what triggers and constitutes that turning point, or on what basis is the new order built. Simply that a regeneration emerges from the state of Krisis. For the Badakhshanis, it was the reconnection with the Aga Khan that constituted the turning point and the re-establishment of symbolic references. Chapter 4 describes the value of that re

The transition that had to be negotiated was a difficult one and the processes of mediating it were complex and sometimes contradictory. As the findings in this thesis attest, the changes that the AKDN tried to steer the community through, were contested on a number of levels. Ideologically, the idea of land privatisation, targeted humanitarian assistance, entry into neighbourhood schools by merit rather than right and the selective focus on some schools or institutions or structures and not others were incomprehensible to begin with. Economically, the AKDN's work was also contentious. It created jobs but also income disparities. It introduced user – fees in health and education, a class of landlords, landowners and a new cadre of young professionals even as it supported farmers, and micro-enterprises. It connected the Badakhshanis to an ideological world different from - and often in conflict with - the one they had come to know for seventy years. And it sometimes appeared to perpetuate inequities in its operations even as it supported the community in its transition. It did this against a general background of the disintegration of the overall regulator (the state), the dissolution of the social pact with it, the absence of an alternative and a distrust of the new order and its institutions that Birzea, Mitter and other theorists identify. The AKDN's work was contextualised in:

‘..the paradoxical coexistence old and the new structures employed in parallel without any political or moral distinction’
(Birzea 1994 p. 17)

Except that there was a moral distinction here. This ‘new order’ about which they were ambivalent was being urged on them by the Imam himself and that

complicated the issue. How did the Badakhshanis reconcile these conflicting phenomena?

In part the answer lies in their recent history. Like other Muslims in Central Asia, the Badakhshanis had learnt to reconcile overlapping and oppositional perspectives under the Soviets. They had successfully reconciled the paradox of being both communists and strong faith communities. They had no option. But they also complied because the Imam asked it of them. This was not the first time that they had been asked to do the unusual. As noted in Chapter 4 section 4.3 Badakhshani oral tradition states that the Aga Khan 111 had directed them to welcome the soviets who would feed, clothe and educate them. This guidance to accept an atheist regime with open arms must have seemed incredible to the Ismailis who, had, at times, even endured persecution because of their faith. Yet they complied. R. Keshavjee (1981) describes a similar situation in Iran where an illiterate, peasant community was asked to build schools for their children, at a time when only 1% of the Iranian population went to school. The community neither grasped the scope of the change nor was in a position to direct it. Yet they acquiesced to being set on a course to modernity they hardly understood. (R. Keshavjee 1981 II 21, cited in S. Keshavjee 1998). The parallels with Badakhshan today are clear. It is the Aga Khan who is guiding the community to move from one ideology to an opposite one which seems inequitable at best and, for some, eroding their quality of life at worst. Again, the meta-narrative of post – Soviet transition offers little choice but it is the community's willingness to adopt the change because the Aga Khan asks it of them that is the point in both instances. Why do the communities acquiesce to these directions? To understand them, it is important to examine the role of the Imam in the Ismaili faith.

9.4.2 The pre-disposition to change

As noted in Chapter 4, section 4.2, the role of the Imam is to guide the community in their material as well as their spiritual lives. An important aspect of

the authority vested in the Imam is that his guidance should enable the Ismaili communities to live according to the times and circumstances they find themselves in. The Imam is 'Imam e Zaman' (Imam of the time) and in that capacity he is looked to for help and direction during times of crises as well in more stable times. The faith in his ability to help them navigate all kinds of changes especially difficult ones, enables the communities to follow his advice even when it appears to be unorthodox. The paradox here is that the Imam uses his very traditional authority to bring about modernising change that, at the time, is almost inconceivable to the communities charged to undertake it. Hence, a traditional authority or structure, the Imamatus, is simultaneously also the conduit for change. Nor, despite its distinctiveness, is the notion exclusive to the Ismaili community. Something similar appears to be at work in the capacity-building programme for the Central Tibetan Administration a 'government in exile' set up by His Holiness the Dalai Lama since 1959 when he was exiled to India since when:

... he has sought to transform the traditional Tibetan governance structure into a modern democratic system (Mahajan and Topgyal 1996 p.218).

The authors go on to state that:

This agenda is bold and perhaps unique in being undertaken by a refugee community that is also trying to preserve its society, culture and religion (ibid).

The parallels are interesting. The consultants were called in to work with an agenda that was owned by the exiled community and its institutions to build capacity at all levels to deliver a five year modernisation development plan to the His Holiness the Dalai Lama. A conducive environment both within the organisation itself and at the broader policy and community level, was identified as an important factor in the success of the programme. The synchronicity between the two centred on:

...the mission to preserve Tibetan identity and eventually to return to a free Tibet (ibid p. 219).

The programme was 'long term' (three years), participatory, and hence, iterative.

It encountered similar issues (frustration with donors who did not understand iterative processes and extended timelines and a community who at times, did not fully appreciate the difference between 'aid' and 'sustainability') that AKF had to deal with. Success was not without tensions and involved localisation in that the consultants handed over their work to local facilitators who have carried on the work and developed of the second and third development plans

The question that then arises is whether the Imam or the Dalai Lama is a structural phenomenon or an agent of change, or both. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the issue, it adds another perspective to the structure/agency debate (Archer 2003; Dolfsma and Verburg 2005) that merits further study. More importantly, it also problematises the dichotomisation of tradition as static and change as necessarily set outside of, or in opposition to it. I hold that this thesis makes visible an important aspect of how communities respond to change. Notwithstanding their values, all cultures must encounter change in some form or another. Built into the cultural fabric, structures or systems, therefore, it is possible to conjecture, there must be the capacity to tolerate change and respond to it in order to survive and to evolve.¹⁷⁸ Where the process of change being advocated, resonates with these deeply-held traditional, cultural, or even political goals or values, then communities will own the change even when it is difficult and the processes of change are contested. I call this phenomenon a 'deep alignment'.

9.4.3 A word on deep alignment

A 'deep alignment' is characterised by the fact that it does not automatically admit changes: there is room for both pragmatism as well as contestation in day -to - day negotiations. Indeed as I have demonstrated resistance is a necessary part of change. What a deep alignment may do is to allow a greater degree of

¹⁷⁸ Reeves's (2004) call that ethnographic studies should precede development intervention is gains added significance by this discussion of how change is negotiated within a community. An understanding of these processes internal to the community would greatly facilitate development efforts on their behalf.

flexibility or tolerance to less well-understood changes or even ideologically contradictory changes although it does not operate in isolation of other factors. In the case of the Badakhshanis, for example, the data indicates that the changes being introduced were acquiesced to, also out of a recognition that the old status quo was no longer functional and because survival was at stake. The linking of development initiatives with a religious authority alone did not create the conditions of institutional development at the IPD. The AKDN's approach to development and the IPD's own ability to appropriate relevant discourses and engage in new learning, played a role as well.

Clearly over time the figure of the Imam was distanced from that of his institutions (ref data) and yet the connection is not totally severed and an element of faith continues to inform the consciousness, of those who work within the AKDN, as well as those outside of it.

The corollary of the concept of deep alignment is misalignment or incongruence not always visible in those terms but apparent in the superficial convergence of, for example, international aid projects and what might actually be sustainable in the context. While a deep alignment will allow discord, contestation and resistance on the surface level, but hold the divergence in place at the deeper level of core values or aligned goals, misalignment will admit a surface discourse that is fundamentally irrelevant at, or in opposition to, the deeper cultural considerations or worldviews and hence makes the change temporary or unsustainable.

Deep alignment constitutes an important 'emergent concept'¹⁷⁹ that this study has identified as having relevance in the discussion of development and change. Its existence facilitates sustainable change that is embedded within the community:

¹⁷⁹ I use the term 'emergent' in quotation marks to highlight the fact that this is an emergent concept as far as the researcher is concerned. I am well aware that for the community to whom the concept belongs it is anything but 'emergent': it is embedded in their cultural responses to changes past, present and probably future.

its absence, gives rise to superficial change that is enshrined in structurally recognisable institutions (local NGOs on women's issues or civil society organisations to name two) and adept at 'international aid –speak' but essentially neither permanent nor unable to 'make a difference' over the long term. This communal, faith-inspired narrative of change is played out against the meta-narrative of the post –Soviet transition and the international NGOs interventions that have driven educational change in the region.

9.5 The transformation of the IPD

The narrative of institutional change at the IPD reflects all the classic elements of the globalising discourses of international aid (see Chapter 3 section 3.3) as well as the AKF hegemonic discourses of how to manage and operate the institution. It also makes visible the distinct development trajectory that the AKDN's faith-inspired approach to development facilitates. (see Appendix 4, Figure 3). And finally it reflects communal responses, resistance to hegemonies and the counter hegemony of appropriation and adaptation that empowered the IPD to take charge of its own development. As is now almost predictable, this empowerment too is not without its own internal tensions. While a transformation has been achieved, change does not halt there.

9.5.1 International influences

The institute's new charter has re-cast it along the lines of a Western academic institution with readily recognised governance and committee structures. The IPD staff's struggles with the processes of project design, implementation plans donor reports (chapter 7 sections 7.3 and 7.4) signify the extent to which the language and terms of international aid dominated local initiatives. The IPD's technical competence (child-centred pedagogies, educational management expertise, communal mobilisation programmes) also attest to its ability to 'deliver' sound programmes of school and system improvements through well-recognised

initiatives. Finally, operating structures (the introduction of performance related salary rises, transparent hiring practices, gender equity, monitoring and evaluation departments, regular consultative meetings point to an efficient, well-run, semi-autonomous institution that serves the schools and the teachers of Badakhshan. However, chapters 7 and 8 also documented a process of transformation which was contested and finally appropriated by the local educators. It could be argued that the institution has turned into a Western style organisation without qualification. But the contestations and the continued reflexivity that marks localisation (see Chapter 8 sections 8.3.5 and 8.3.6) seem to imply that the institution is actually transforming into its present state with all the struggle that this entails, rather than simply allowing Western structures or systems to be grafted on it. It is, perhaps, moving closer to Hyden's issue of wanting to find institutional forms that are also developmental although it may be too early to claim that as yet for the IPD.

As noted in chapters 7 and 8, AKF managed strategic development at the IPD, instituted bureaucratic controls on funding and had expatriates in charge at senior levels in both organisations for a period of time. Foucault's (1980) contention that discourses of knowledge and power are inextricably interlinked is evident in these relationships operating in different arenas: governance (with respect to how the IPD, now an NGO-like organisation, should operate), economic know-how (the securing of funds from the international aid donors) and programmatic /technical knowledge (child-centred pedagogies, programme design, curriculum and resource materials development, monitoring and evaluation, donor report writing). Governance as noted in Chapter 8, section 8.2.1 is one area where AKF might have focused better.

9.5.2 Hegemonies and counter hegemonies again?

While the developments described in chapter 8 may point to a classic case of Gramscian counter-hegemonic discourse triumphing over the dominant hegemonies it is important to remember that the CEO was a product of AKDN's

practice of developing local capacity over a long period of time to enable local people to take over their own development. Nor is the AKDN totally absent from the scene: the AKF CEO reports to the international AKDN committee and is linked both in accountability and support terms with his counterparts globally as well as the head offices of AKDN. The implications of AKDN's faith –inspired version of development are discussed in 8section 9.3.2 and 9.4: the new CEO himself epitomises both 'tradition' and 'change'. He is the product of the communist system as well as the product of AKDN's capacity building strategy.

What is interesting is that the traditional networks while still operational at the IPD now come under scrutiny through a different lens - that of the formal NGO type institution based on Western notions of transparency, accountability, efficiency to name a few characteristics. And, again, despite the strong contestations described in chapters 6, 7 and 8 the AKF is still seen as an Imamati institution, where 'Imamati' does not mean simply belonging to the Aga Khan but implies a particular code of ethics and commitment: the behaviour of its staff framed in those terms:

As one participant put it:

When there was all that tension between us it did not feel like an Imamati institution' And I thought if people work for themselves (their own ends) here only then what will my work make a difference? (LWIOSG0).

To use Gramsci's terms again, IPD staff, having had exposure to some of these features of Western institutions through the, albeit often contested, management of the expatriates, are now in a better position to challenge their own traditional informal practices.

I did not realise it (a consultative management style) was a new kind of management. I thought it was the way the Imam wanted it. But then I saw it in other places (LOWIG).

Hence traditional structures are not simply resurrected without qualification. They are now queried, compared and occasionally challenged as well.

The appropriation of new structures by the traditional, non-formal ones, however, does not tantamount to an unqualified return to 'traditional norms'. Rather, it attests to the capacity both of tradition to absorb and incorporate the new, as well as the usage of new knowledge to re-shape or challenge the traditional. The dialogic relationship between the two, underscores the dynamism of tradition in the communities. Change or transformations are not teleological but continuously evolving. Interestingly, overt challenges even when they do occur are mounted in the name of the Aga Khan again despite the distancing of him and his institution and the knowledge that AKF is not aware that this is not an 'Imamati' institution inasmuch as it does not deal with issues of faith in its day to day work.

9.5.3 IPD transforming: the old and the new

The processes of transformation at the IPD broadly reflect Venda's four principles of transformation: with some modifications.

Venda's first principle, amply evident at the IPD, is that the old and the new order/systems/processes co-exist even in conflict in the initial stages of the transformation. In fact in the IPD-AKF case, the closer the encounter, the stronger the conflicts but also the greater the changes at the IPD (See Table 2 in Chapter 7 section 7.2).

Venda's second principle of transformation states that there needs to be a bridge between the old and the new and that the closer the two are, the smoother the transformation. I want to argue that In the IPD-AKF encounter, the notion of deep alignment intersects with that of the bridge giving it a more extended utility. The difference between the two is that while Venda emphasises *similarities or connections* between the old and the new as important in easing the transformation from one to the other, deep alignment focuses on the *differences* between them that are overcome because of the underlying congruence of intent

or objectives or values symbolised by the bridge. To extend Venda's image of the bridge in principle 2 deep alignment constitutes not the *distance* the bridge spans but its *strength* determining what load it can carry. Simply put the deeper the alignment, the more able it is to withstand the tensions inherent in a particular transformation. It is where the resilience, as opposed to the linking function of the bridge, lies. In the case of the IPD it could be argued that the deep alignment is the office of the Aga Khan and his leadership which the AKDN and the community share.

The third principle of arresting the decline of the old system before the whole process is overwhelmed by chaos was manifested at the IPD through the process of localisation which finally allowed it to appropriate the process of transformation. The stabilisation, Venda's principle four, is reflected in better management of change, the lessening of tensions and a more participatory approach to development that localisation facilitates. While IPD continues to evolve there is no doubt that it is now a very different institution from the 'method centre' that it was in 1996.

9.6 The IPD in the national context: wither now?

As noted in chapter 8 section 9.3.8, increasingly, IPD is moving away from the egalitarian discourse of the early reform agenda towards a more capitalist approach. But while the egalitarian discourse is complemented by the donor – driven pragmatic discourse of selectivity of support. (IPD work plans 1998-2006, initiatives are now framed in the IPD strategy (IPD 2006). The institution has a strong sense of its own direction as well as its importance. It's public – private status gives it the option of looking towards Central government and raising the quality of both the regional and central education system or looking further Eastwards towards a wider regional focus aligning more closely to the AKDN initiatives in Afghanistan, the rest of Central Asia, and even Western China in due course.

IPD staff justify their retention through increased productivity in keeping with the Foucauldian hidden discursive practices but they but this is something they now challenge as well bringing to bear their exposure to innovation and experimentation that characterised the early days of the AKF intervention. With respect to governance, the institute is still finding its direction as the revival of the earlier abandoned AKF governance structures indicates. However, it is too early as yet to predict how indigenous forms of governance will be fused or reconciled with the newly learned ones

9.6.1 Relationship with national government: uneasy compromises?

Chapter 8 illustrated the IPD's tendency to see the government as the 'other' whose demands on IPD sometimes encumber it. While it could be argued that to some extent the IPD has emulated AKF perspectives of 'us' and 'them', (i.e. AKDN and 'other' institutions or AKDN and non – AKDN personnel) this is not a purely AKF generated discourse. The government had lost much its credibility after the collapse of the Soviet Union (see Chapters 2 section 2.4.1 and 6 section 6.4.1). The civil war and the persecutions of Badakhshanis did nothing to ameliorate the situation. Finally the rising levels of corruption also make the government appear to be self-serving rather than protecting the citizen's rights. (Marat 2006; Zokirova 2006)

Moreover, the AKDN's presence has also been used to cut Badakhshan out of monies given to the government by the World Bank, and other international agencies on the grounds that the AKDN was looking after its own in Badakhshan. This is a recurrent issue. I recall having to make a strong case for Badakhshan to receive its share of World Bank money. Years later training under the FTI initiative was also an issue with the central government claiming that the all Badakhshani teachers had been trained by the AKDN and so no money was needed there (LMYAPMZ).

As noted in Chapter 7, section 7.2.2.1, the IPD's new charter was closely watched by the Central government. In the past it has made several attempts to down-grade the IPD, sometimes in line with all regional IPDs (considering them as ineffective) and occasionally on its own. Within the IPD, this is attributed to its ability to attract donor funding, deliver good programmes and outperform the national Central IPD. While the attempts have been unsuccessful so far because the Badakhshani was created by regional authorities (see Chapter 4 section 4.6) and can only be dismantled by them according to law, it does serve to periodically resurrect the spectre of all of the AKDN investment being 'lost' if the institute is indeed down-graded. This it was, in fact, that had delayed AKF investment in the IPD initially unused as it was to working totally within a government institution whose status, function, leadership could be changed at a whim.¹⁸⁰

On the one hand, Badakhshan's non-compliance in allowing its IPD to be down-graded is likely to reinforce the notion of it being different from the rest of Tajikistan and, in the eyes of the government, then, justify the withholding of aid to the region on the grounds that it does not need it. Yet, the IPD is sometimes used by the national government to showcase to the international community what the country has got to enable it to effect educational change. The IPD now sits on national curriculum and textbook development committee where no other regional board is admitted and has even engaged in institutional development for the Central IPD. The assumptions in the model of educational change that McLeish sets out (Chapter 3 section 3.2.4) in which the state leads the change through legislation and reform are challenged by the IPD-AKF encounter. Development in this case is led by local, decentralised initiatives rather than by central government (Mehbrahtu, Crossley and Johnson 2000). Centrifugal forces are balanced by centripetal forces that promote innovation and diversity more

¹⁸⁰ This had happened at another regional institution, the Kulyob in-service institution, where IPD had seconded its educational management specialist work with a progressive head who was then removed and replaced by a more .conservative head whose agenda was to maintain the status quo rather than to develop or change (LIOEMS)

easily: developments at the IPD outstrip those at central level (Kiernan 2000) creating both tensions and opportunities between the centre and the periphery.¹⁸¹

9.6.2 IPD and the international community

At national fora with the international donors, the IPD is welcomed for its competence by the national players. Its technical competence, familiarity with donor discourses, ability to devise and deliver on programmes creates a sense of comfort for the international community and results in the generation of revenue for the national players. In that sense the national government welcomes its presence. However it often finds itself then having to resist implementation and delivery responsibility and accountability that the national authorities seek to devolve to it rather than take responsibility for it themselves (LYAMZ) (LYMAPMZ).

As a part of its contribution to national education initiatives, IPD has assisted the institutional development of another regional IPD, seconding its staff to working with them under a USAID contract (IBET 2004). It now sits on national curriculum boards where other regional IPDs do not and has created curriculum enrichment frameworks that have been nationally endorsed and used. (IPD 2006) These contributions enable it to re-enter the national arena (as well as other regional arenas) and, through the sharing of its expertise, begin to heal the scars of the civil war. However, it will evoke and retreat behind its regional status if its survival is threatened. It has, too, the luxury of knowing that it can serve a wider region that includes Afghanistan and the other Central Asian states through the AKDN.

¹⁸¹ The IBET evaluation report 2004 notes that the Central IPD speaks patronisingly of IPD Khorog and seeks to downplay its achievements. (IBET 2004). The central government has, since the writing of this thesis given exempted the IPD from its subordinate status to the Central IPD by a special decree. However this does not mean the end of tensions between the two institutions. (AKF 2009).

9.6.3 Multiple identities: IPD re-cast

The IPD has not only been transformed institutionally but is also in the process of acquiring multiple identities. It is regional, part-government, part NGO (Logos) among other manifestations. It could be said to be in transition: competing identities are the mark of that evolution. In and of themselves they are neither mutually exclusive nor detrimental. However if the institution does not engage a degree of honest and earnest self-reflection then there are dangers that some agendas within its multiple identities will take precedence over others.

Yet the IPD's core function remains unchanged. It is being transformed so that it can deliver better education to the young people of Badakhshan, a goal that the regional government of Badakhshan and the AKF share. Its operation structures, systems and programmes are now more in line with other higher educational institutions world –wide and it has secured a mandate, through its charter, that allows it to operate beyond Badakhshan at national and regional (to serve Afghanistan for example) levels as well. It is telling, and in keeping with IPD's 'public-private' status that it alone of all the regional IPDs sits on the national curriculum board and is simultaneously developing expertise in educational materials creation in order to fill an educational market niche and need. While this pragmatism reflects the drive towards sustainability, it is a moot point whether it does not also signal a degree of self-sufficiency that acts as an insurance against central government failure to reform the educational system. The IPD is poised to do both: to pull the rest of the system up with itself or to go it alone in Badakhshan if necessary.

But the assumption that the 'centre-periphery' disconnect alluded to above is merely one of an uneven pace of development needs to be challenged. The question of whether NGOs actually manage to alienate their constituents from their own governments and systems, or whether their programmes help to bring communities and their governments closer, merits further research particularly in the context of post-Soviet transition. It is important to remember that the then

Regional Education Director asked for the IPD to be made into an institute of international standing (LORED). The consultant who designed the charter based it on a Western model with an eye on donor acceptability (EMOF) and the IPD director accepted the changes in the name of reviving or, rather, re-inventing the institution.¹⁸² However, in 2004 IPD had expanded geographically but not in vision or scope. It seemed dependent on AKF for its direction, its funding, even its future. By 2006 it had already set up Logos, re-directed its access to knowledge, and created its own strategy and seemed to be in full charge of its own development. In response to my query to the AKF programme manager about what had made the difference I was told:

They just needed a bit of respect (LYMAZO)

But what I saw was agency enabled such that it was not just regaining old ground but venturing into new spaces. As Ari Antikaenen attests:

Empowerment makes no distinction between ability to (power in) and control, (power over) and it can also include adjustment and integration or power with. Empowerment contains within it two aspects: transformation of the individual's self definition and transformation of the social environment through participation. The focal point in the change of social structures is the breaking of the structures of subordination. (Antikaenen 1998 p. 219).

Although Antikaenen is speaking of the individual, his comments resonate with IPD's position as well. With a measure of economic independence and its sense of purpose restored, IPD felt it was both 'able to' and had 'control over' its own work. Just how they will choose to run their institution, how they envision and implement programmes and how they try to influence their own government on educational change remains to be seen.

¹⁸² The context and encounter of change works in both directions: the AKDN has also had to learn to respond to a different (post – Soviet) development scenario in which its role was to restore and retain educational provision as well as to change and develop it and in which it had to work with the state almost exclusively in the absence of private educational provision. The nature and scope of AKDN's work with government systems is still evolving particularly in issues of governance and civil society. The network needs to explore further how best to engage local communities with both to facilitate better development.

9.7 Conclusion

The meaning of educational change in this complex contest has involved looking back at the nature and communal experience of such pervasive change in the past, juxtaposing it with the current international development and transition discourses in the Former Soviet Union and linking both with the findings of this study. Institutional change, the chapter concludes, reflects both the meta-narratives of transition (Birzea 1994, Vende 1999, Mitter 2003) as well as the micro-narratives of resistance, culture, knowledge-power, local hegemonies and counter-hegemonies (Foucault, Gramsci). What has emerged as central to development in Badakhshan is the role of faith in development manifested through the emergent concept of deep alignment which draws on long-held core beliefs about the community's worldview and its identity. That is offered as a new contribution to the debate on international development in countries in transition. The next chapter returns briefly to the research questions and looks ahead to further studies in this area.

Chapter 10: Post script

10.1 Introduction

This chapter offers my final reflections on this study on educational change in Badakhshan. It begins by considering what was uncovered with respect to educational change in countries in transition. It then considers some methodological issues that the research highlighted. In the course of the study many questions, incidental to the central focus but important in themselves, emerged. These are touched on in the third part of this chapter as potential areas of further research. The faith perspective is discussed next. The chapter concludes with reflections on what the study has meant for me both personally and professionally.

10.2 Educational change in countries in transition

I set out in this study to explore the broad question 'What does educational change mean to a group of educators in a country in transition?' I also wanted to examine how different ideologies, Communism, Islam and Capitalism influence educational, and particularly institutional, change. I wanted to know what could be learnt about such change through exploring the transformation of an indigenous educational institution. Lastly I wanted to find out whether faith perspectives made a difference to how development was carried out. The exact research questions that I sought to explore were:

'What does educational change mean in the context of the profound societal (political, ideological, economic and social) change in post – Soviet Tajikistan?'

And,

'What can be learnt about such change through exploring the transformation of an indigenous educational institution?'

While this thesis does not claim to have arrived at definitive answers, the exploration of the encounter between the AKF and the IPD has yielded some insights into the issues raised.

Educational change In Tajikistan was initially triggered by other societal changes. In that state of crisis created by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the civil war, the focus was on survival. With the coming of the AKDN for the Badakhshanis, the change was from despair to hope but also to adjustment to new ideologies and changed economic realities. The AKDN mediated the move from centrally planned economic structures and bases towards capitalism but with certain social parameters in place. This, in turn, ushered in inequity, disparity in incomes, as well as progress and growth and entry into a larger global arena. The community has come to terms with the contradictions between being guided towards a capitalist system and the tension that this creates with other values embedded in both the communist ideology, Islam and the community ethos.

The data that formed the basis of chapters 7 and 8 adds another layer to the perspective on change. Through a close-up look at the transformation of one educational site, the IPD in which the AKF has played a catalytic role, a number of factors affecting change have emerged.

My research has found that educational change in post – Soviet countries is not a monolithic process but is, indeed a series of simultaneous processes put into action by one major change – the collapse of the Soviet Union – and triggered by the larger political and economic changes that attended it. The study underscores the importance of understanding the larger context of post-Soviet transition in order to understand educational change from one ideological perspective to another. It also underscores the importance of looking at the past to see if other such pervasive ideological changes had occurred to examine how the communities dealt with them at that time. At the institutional level, the changes are also multiple and simultaneous: structures, management processes, operational focus, practice, all change at once, and at different rates. In fact,

change is an on-going process punctuated by events that are pivotal, change-markers: the collapse of the Soviet Union, the civil war, the arrival of the AKDN, the localisation of AKF to name a few.

Change processes are resisted in overt and covert ways, while also creating spaces for new learning. Change is adopted even as it is contested: it is, itself, both transforming and transformed to align with local and cultural needs. The contestation is necessary for local ownership of the change. While it comprises responses based on traditional strategies for coping with imposed or unexpected changes, resistance is not focused on retaining the status quo but on how to change and sometimes what to change. The self-reflection involved in the process at the individual and collective level ensures that there is no return to the 'pre-change' situation. The development perspective of - and relationship to - the catalytic external organisation (AKF) of the communities wherein change is being effected is crucial to how changes are accepted and engaged with. In this particular case that relationship is based on the link with the Aga Khan, head of AKF and spiritual leader of the Ismaili (including the Badakhshani) community.

The thesis also identified deep alignment as an 'emergent' concept which needs to be taken into account in the consideration of other familiar concepts such as international development and change processes. More importantly, it demonstrates the need for a re-consideration of the role of faith and argues for giving it a more central place in the development of communities. As the enquiry reveals in the case of Ismailism, a faith based firmly on traditional lines of authority does not necessarily imply a regression into a pre-Socialist, pre-modern world of Islam. Rather, the traditional authority is used to usher in and mediate changes emanating from post – Soviet transitions. Faith here has acted as a bridge between the old and the new, steering the community into the current social reality, preserving some of the old or familiar socialist values as well as introducing new ones more aligned with the current, more globalised world.

In interrogating these ideas, the study makes a small contribution to academic knowledge about the complexity of change in countries in transition and hopefully

opens up space for a re-examination of the accepted approaches to these areas of knowledge.

Any study of change must engage with continuity and I want to end this section with a look at what that has meant in this study by drawing on Chapters 2, 3 in particular. There was continuity first and foremost in the circumstances that precipitated change. Post – Soviet transition was not the first sweeping, externally imposed change that the Central Asian communities had experienced: the coming of the Soviets had been an equally momentous event. Both transitions were imposed. Both were diametrically opposed to the communities' prevailing ideological and cultural worlds: from a lived religious framework to communism and then from communism to capitalism. Both required considerable axiological shifts in outlooks and behaviour. Finally both transitions were pervasive and uncompromising. The differences are that Soviet rule was directly imposed and the power centre, obvious. The current situation is imposed through the economic and political hegemonic discourses of globalization and the transition to a market economy. It elicits compliance through the international interventions of the World Bank and the IMF and through the terms of economic aid that they disburse.

There was a continuity of responses to changes although this is an aspect of change that is often overlooked. In Soviet times the Badakhshanis, like other Muslim communities, developed complementary and parallel structures and used them to keep religious practice alive if interiorised to a large extent (see Chapter 4). They found a way of living in both worlds, of living a paradox as I have termed it. They held two contradictory views simultaneously, a religious one and a communist one, without necessarily experiencing them as contradictory.¹⁸³ As noted earlier in Chapter 2, notwithstanding their very different ontological origins, the axiological links between the two systems, an emphasis on the communal

¹⁸³ Adib Khalid tells of how when he first met a couple of Muslims in Tashkent just after the collapse of the Soviet Union, they invited him to toast this meeting of brothers in faith with vodka (Khalid 2007 p.1).

rather than the individual, on group solidarity rather than personal advancement, on egalitarianism rather than elitism,¹⁸⁴ on sharing rather than accumulating, helped to make sense of otherwise contradictory phenomena. Fundamental differences were mediated by common axiological practices.

Indeed, the Aga Khan himself recognises the link. In speaking of the transition in Tajikistan he said:

But how to get from here to there without inflicting cruel damage on a people already buffeted by shortages and change? Again, the way is not entirely clear, but one should strive to retain the powerful ties of mutual support that- in different ways – bind individuals together in Muslim and Communist societies. And one should see that the impressive gains in health and education are not lost in the transition, for it would be unconscionable to allow, for example, the equality of men and women that has been achieved in Tajikistan over the last 60 years to be erased in the transition to a market economy (Aga Khan IV MIT 1994 27th May).

This capacity to hold two sometimes contradictory structures and practices in place and in parallel is not, I wish to argue, an issue of an oversimplified identification. Or indeed cynicism (Yurchak 1997) It is the sophisticated ability to live a paradox where two worldviews are reconciled where possible and simply juxtaposed against each other where it is not possible to equate them. I posit that this is one important characteristic of the community that has shaped their responses to those other imposed and inevitable changes such as the transition to capitalism and a market economy.

In the current situation a different kind of contradiction presents itself in the form of the AKDN. It is both the conduit of the transition and the mediator, both rescuer and also a power broker. That makes it more complex and the community to arrive at clarity of perspective. Another difference is that Soviet rule isolated the community: the AKDN through its own global networks is now

¹⁸⁴ This does not detract from the fact that elites not only existed during the Soviet era but in Central Asia were deliberately created by them to serve the communist ideal.

globalising it. In both cases the Imam's guidance was important - and controversial. A knowledge of how the communities managed to hold on to their faith is important, this thesis holds, in understanding how they deal with complex changes. The reverse is also true. To understand Islam in Central Asia it is important to take account of the Soviet era in the shaping of Central Asian Muslims (Khalid 2007). Continuities, particularly those of strategic responses, explain changes. These include the ability to live a paradox and hold contradictions in balance without letting go of what are core values and beliefs. The second is the ability to adapt and adjust to the new circumstances, and through contestation, to bring the new under the communities' control, appropriating it to meet their own agendas. Hence, as Khalid states, history matters and those who would seek to aid Tajikistan in the transition need to understand its importance in what they seek to do.

10.3 The methodology

The qualitative case study approach that was used for this study is not in itself an unusual methodological approach. What is uncommon is the focus of the research at the middle level of the education system. As was established in chapter 2 most studies of educational change in the Former Soviet Union concentrate either on the classroom or the tertiary level. This study's contribution in charting the transformation of the IPD is that it focuses on the in-service institutional level. Inasmuch as it does that, it adds to the body of knowledge about educational change in the Former Soviet Union at that level of the system where policy and practice intersect. Also, unusual was my own position in relation to the research. My previous presence in the setting as a programme manager placed me in a privileged position with regards to data collection. I was privy to information and confidences that a total stranger would have been unable to access. Because I was neither Badakhshani nor a total stranger, I was also able to assess the data with the benefit of previous knowledge of events, policies and people. The situation also challenged me to constant vigilance over how I collected and interpreted the data. I continuously asked myself 'how do I know

this?' Kvale and Brinkmann (2007) describe this process although I had no name for it at the time:

We may also speak of a reflexive objectivity in the sense of being reflexive about one's contributions as a researcher to the production of knowledge. Objectivity in qualitative inquiry here means striving for objectivity about subjectivity..... Striving for sensitivity about one's prejudices, one's subjectivity, involves a reflexive objectivity (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2007 p.242)

In writing up the research, I came to understand that my position was a very special one which allowed insights but not total immersion, objectivity but not complete detachment from those whose participation facilitated my research. It is a third position between the insider and the outsider and one that offers a better perspective on research than either.

The issues of time and space in Badakhshan also focused my attention on the contextual features that determine data collection. This is not a new insight but Badakhshan challenged even the most basic premises. Interviews could not be conducted uninterrupted, translation could not solve the problem of language in a focus group setting, and the exit of a head teacher from the room did not necessarily mean that authority figures were no longer present. Even in a familiar context data collection sprung surprises for me that had to be dealt with.

Perhaps the most important contribution to research methodology that this study makes was arrived at almost accidentally through my decision to 'give back' a distilled version of the data I had collected from interviews, observations and documents for what I expected to be verification or data confirmation. With hindsight what transpired was completely in keeping with the phenomenon under examination. The verification was turned spontaneously by the participants into a reflection of the situation at that time (2004) and a comparison with what they perceived as their reality on my return (2006). This not only added a whole new dimension to the study (captured in chapter 8) but underscored the value of my partnership with the respondents.

My method of giving back also revealed interesting nuances that might otherwise have been missed. In providing not a transcript of their conversations but my analysis of the situation based on diverse data collection methods the anxiety of focusing on their own contribution was distanced. This might account for the spontaneity of the reflections and comparisons. I obtained data I had not thought to ask for and it changed the direction of the thesis in important ways to the one that is presented here. Without this creative engagement on their part I would have been presenting a thesis that focused on the tensions and the difficulties that the snapshot in 2004 had revealed. Now I could take that entire story forward to a new ending or a new beginning depending on how one perceives the effects of localisation outlined in chapter 8. It led me to the very important realisation of the on-going nature of change itself and the on-going interpretations of it as layers of further experience serve to qualify the very 'rawness' of direct experience.

An equally unpredicted but very rewarding development in the data collection stage was the role of my translator who became engaged with the research and the respondents to the extent that they would both draw him into the interviews as well as talk to him about them afterwards (see Chapter 5). Again I was struck by the danger of 'pigeon holing' people into roles. The interviews often began and ended not with me but with him as he brought people to my 'house' and escorted them back from it. Like the respondents he too contributed to enrich the work and explode yet another of the myths: that of 'the transparent translator'. I would argue that there is no such thing in the fieldwork context.

10.4 Further areas of research

The models that focus on educational change in countries of transition provide some excellent leads for research such as mine. Further work on the practical aspects of how change is affected would help to examine the efficacy of the

theoretical frameworks focused on so far in the literature. Currently, that link is not so readily established. This study goes some way towards creating a bridge between the macro processes of post – Soviet transition and the very human struggles and dilemmas of those undergoing it. However, it is just a start and more work is needed in this area. In the field of development studies that further work on the cultural aspect of development, needs to build on the very valuable work on participation (Chambers, 1963; 1997; Sephens, 2007; Chabbot 2003). It must look also at how cultures are changing as a result of globalisation and examine how local forces encounter global ones and how they resist and/or adapt to pressure on their education systems. This would fill a tremendous gap and help to both break down the discipline divide between international relations, globalisation studies and development studies, and do more justice to the complexity of the actual grassroots work carried out in development contexts. There is certainly more room also for work on the impact of Soviet ideology on the outlook of communities and an exploration of how much or how readily communities had internalised that ideology as well as whether they are reverting to or adapting and revitalising previous cultural worldviews. The concept of deep alignment is just a start in this direction and needs further development.

In undertaking my study I was very clear that it was not going to be an evaluation of the impact of the AKF programmes on the IPD or the educational system or indeed on teachers and pedagogy in the classroom. But the programmatic focus is an important aspect of educational change interventions and merits attention in its own right. In this thesis how the participants perceived and experienced the changes introduced was crucial to how they understood, analysed and appropriated or rejected certain innovations. An equally revealing study particularly in this context would have been a comparative one between the governmental IPD and the Mountain Societies Development Programme a private, local NGO set up by the AKF to work on rural support programme. That might have shed more light on government – local NGO interactions and relationships. Indeed the whole area of local governance and civil society programmes might be another productive area of research.

The role of faith in development is also an area meriting further study. In Central Asia, the 'revival' of Islam has been associated with an erosion of the modern way of life. Women for example, are seen as being assigned and relegated to 'traditional' roles as caregivers and homemakers (Harris 2004). But as this thesis demonstrates, 'tradition' itself is dynamic and changes and religion can be a very successful bridge between old, cherished values and new realities. For some communities like the Badakhshani Ismailis who are multiply marginalized – as a minority faith interpretation in relations to other Muslims, geographically in the borderland margins of Tajikistan and as a linguistic minority within Tajikistan - their faith offers an important means of being connected to the wider global community.

Faith based research is couched in 'cultural studies' or confined to anthropology where it is allowed to be tidily filed away as a 'study'. What is in fact closer to the reality is that religion plays an important part in communities' daily lives, be it work or school or farming or anything else. This study reveals the extent to which religious vocabulary and concepts are embedded in everyday perspectives. Research that serves to bridge the secular /sacred divide so prevalent in Western academic structures would go far in providing a more nuanced insight into communities, provide more relevant development engagement, and help bridge the knowledge gap that creates a barrier between the communities and the global international interventions, whether they are government -led or NGO-led.

The research agenda can be endless: what I have outlined here are the salient possibilities thrown up in my engagement with this study and which would have helped me along this journey.

10.5 What it has meant for me

The meaning of educational change in Badakhshan been revealed to be complex, full of struggle and new learning: that is also true of this thesis journey.

It has been long, often contentious and also carried out against a background of changes to my own life. I hope I have been able to illumine, if in a small way, the trials and the triumphs of the people I worked amongst and who were the inspiration for this study. I owe much to their warmth and friendship, their candour and their courage. I have tried to reflect the complexity of educational change in their context and to make visible some of the many processes at work. I am grateful for their gift of honesty, trust, and intellectual rigour, which I trust I have reflected faithfully in this work. And I am happy that the research was also site of resistance for them. I have been both exhilarated and, at times, overwhelmed by the sheer dynamism of the process. If ever I was in danger of taking something for granted it I would be stopped in my tracks by the unusual, the overlooked, and the other perspective. The research also challenged my ability to theorise educational change in the post – Soviet context. I struggled with the temptation to frame it in the familiar context of Western educational change theories, but I chose to risk using the fledgling, but to me more relevant scholarship from the Former Soviet Union itself as well, to underpin the study.

Finally, this study has also been a transition for me from being a practitioner to being something of a scholar: To do it, I too had to put faith at the centre of the endeavour. I hope the trust has been justified: the transition certainly feels like a transformation.

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Appendix 1: Semi – structured interview questions

Note: the questions were not always asked in this order nor where all questions asked to all participants. The participants also set the direction of the interview with their comments and observations which generated other questions of clarifications or further exploration. See appendix 4.

1. Getting comfortable and setting the scene:

- Tell me a little about yourself. How did you come to be a
- Tell me a bit about your childhood, your family, your own education.
- What was the education system like when you were a child?
- What was it like when you became a?
- What would you say have been the most important changes that you have seen in your life? How did you cope/respond to them?
- Are these changes you have welcomed? Why and why not?
- Are there changes that you have initiated? Why and why not?

Note: Some of these 'first questions' did not always need to be asked because I had prior knowledge of some participants' backgrounds already.

2. About educational change:

- Can you describe the education system in the Soviet times?
- What do you think the education system is like now?
- Do you think that things have changed much since the collapse of the Soviet Union? How?
- Who or what do you think has been responsible for the changes?

Note: there was sometimes an overlap between the question on the Soviet education system and what the system was like when they were children. Both questions did not need to be asked in some cases.

2.a. Specific questions to policy makers such as the Regional Educational Director

- What reforms have been introduced since the collapse of the Soviet Union? Why? Which have been successful and which, not? Why?
- What changes are now planned in the education system? Why and by whom? What do you think about them?

3. In relation to the IPD:

- What was the IPD like in Soviet times? And immediately after? And now?
- Why do you think things have changed?
- What would you say are the main changes in how the IPD does its business? What do you think about those changes?
- How do changes happen at the IPD? Who initiates them or introduces them? How did they happen during Soviet times?
- Have you had to initiate any changes at IPD? How did you do it? What was the most difficult change you had to initiate?
- How do you think the community saw the IPD? How does it see it now? What about the education community? (local and national)
- Have other government institutions changed? How? Why?

4. About the AKDN and other NGOs:

- Tell me about when the AKDN first arrived on GBAO. How did you feel and how did the community feel about it?
- Have those feelings, ideas, perceptions changed? Why?

- What changes has the AKDN brought a) personally for you b) professionally?
- Do you agree with everything the AKDN does?
- Do you agree with how it does it?
- How would you do it differently?

5. Changes in the community:

- What would you say have been the major changes in the community
- Are these changes welcome? Why and why not?
- Are these changes in the community's control? Why and why not? Or: how did these changes come about? How did the community respond to them?

6. Final questions:

- What would you say have been the most important changes that you have seen in your life? How did you cope/respond to them?
- Are these changes you have welcomed? Why and why not?
- Do you have any other thoughts that you can share with me about anything that we have talked about and even what we have not talked about as yet?
- I've asked you a lot of questions. Do you want to ask me anything?

Appendix 2: Local Documentation Used

AKF work plans 1996-2002

AKF Project Overviews (submitted to head office each year in early December)
1998-to 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006

AKF strategy papers 2001, 2002

IBET evaluation papers 2004

IPD work plans 2000-2006

IPD evaluations by the Swiss Development Corporation (2001)

IPD evaluation commissioned by AKF head office 2005

IPD long term strategy 2006

Minutes of Meetings between IPD and AKF (2003-5)

Minutes of Council meetings where available (2003-4)

Appendix 3: Career biographies

Career biography questions included the following although sometimes people did not need too much prompting and simply narrated their stories.

- Tell me about how you came to be a
- Why did you change from doing..... to doing.....? (if appropriate)
- Tell me a bit about life during the civil war and after
- What do you remember about that time and when the AKDN arrived?
- What /how did that change things?

Tell me about your education: how did you come to be an Admin manager with AKF?

I went to school a year earlier than usual. The school was a primary school and had 4 classrooms and was up to grade 3. They then built another 4 classrooms across the corridor so that the building was extended to the other side of the corridor. So the school now also included grades 5 and 6. I then studied in school No 5 which went from grade 1-10 and so I graduated a year earlier.

I was interested in aviation and wanted to go for military aviation but I was too young and so I was not accepted into the programme. Luckily for me we had an outward bound weekend and the leader/teacher of that outing was connected with civil aviation in Ukraine and s/he talked about it, and I thought 'Why not? It's still a way of becoming a pilot'. The programme included training and then you would return to your own country and join the Tajik aviation company. So I talked

with my parents and they encouraged me to go ahead. There was then another decision to be made: I could join a school or an institution or the university. My parents suggested the school but I wanted to try the institution. You need to have a track record of 5 (rating) in each subject and then if you get an excellent score in one of the four subjects, you would be exempt from the other three exams. And if you get excellent marks in two subjects then you would not need to go ahead with the other subjects. In my case, I had good marks but no 'excellents' (5s) and so I had to sit exams in all four subjects but I missed getting the right score by one mark. I was deeply disappointed. So I came back to Khorog and my father, who was a teacher at Kirov, found me a job at the concrete reinforcement plant. (Laughs). I lasted one day and that was it. S was the foreman and he will still tell you this. I ran away after that first day. This was very heavy work and I was slim and not fitted to do this kind of work. (Laughs again).

Again, in our system, you could not stay at home idle, you had to be employed. I then got another job. For eight months. I re-took the exams the following year and passed in all four subjects and went to the Ukraine. The studying was hard because the medium of instruction was Russian. I had studied in Tajik: we spoke Shugni at home so although our Russian was good it was not so good. But I did well. I had to interrupt my studies to do my military service and then resumed my studies and I graduated in 1992 and defended my thesis in Kiev in 1993. But there was already a dilemma: the Soviet Union was collapsing and the future of the aviation industry was very precarious. By the summer and autumn of 1992, the Soviet Union was already collapsing. I arrived in Moscow; luckily I did not need a ticket..... (checked why; because s/he was already a part of the aviation industry) This was November 1992 and I stayed there till Feb 1993 when I defended my diploma. No-one wanted to return to Tajikistan or to their countries because of the collapse and I had to make a decision about whether to stay where I was or in the Ukraine, or whether to return home since my parents were there. My younger brother (who was also training to be a pilot) was stranded there in Khorog, my sister was there too but I still felt I should go home. But when I talked to my parents they felt that I should stay out if I could. My brother and sister were with them to look after them, they said, And what would I do if I went

there anyway? So I decided to stay out: I thought I would study English and economics.

Why those subjects?

We were already aware that things were changing and that we needed to have English and to know about capitalism and the market economy. So I talked to my parents about staying out to study. They felt that there was no use in me coming home. I told them I could study in the Ukraine and support myself. They felt that this would be better. There was no point in coming home and if I could support myself (because they could barely support themselves) then I should stay out. On the one hand this meant that there was one less person to worry about in Badakhshan. I had been partly supporting myself for a while already. In 1986 my parents helped me out with money while I was in the Ukraine but now I had a night job, from 9 – 2 a.m. taking deliveries and staking the shelves at a supermarket. This helped to pay my fees – education had already begun to be commercialized by then – and I studied English and market economics, accounting etc. This was an 18 month course and in the summer of 1994 I graduated and defended my candidacy and returned to Khorog.

Tell me a bit about life after the civil war and after.

All was changed when I got back. Jobs were hard to come by. PRDP (Parmir Relief and Development Programme as the AKDN initiative was known earlier in its humanitarian stage) was operating at that time and I tried to get a job through the people who I knew. But for 3-4 months there was nothing. I went to G who was working in PRDP at the time. My sister asked M A if he could help me. At that time there was a geologist from London Royal School of Geology who needed a translator. I travelled with him to all of GBAO. It was the first time that I actually got to know the villages and valleys of GBAO really well. I did some other work for PRDP, mapping, transferring documents on to computers, doing other

people's CVs. The geologist was happy with my work and asked for my details promising to forward them to H F (head of PRDP) with his recommendations but nothing happened for months. I had no resources to do PRDPs work. The Kirov school where my father worked had an old computer a Yamaha and me and others used it to get our work done. I talked to Y too but there was no opening anywhere.

That time, 1994/5 was the worst and very difficult for my family. We had been a relatively well-off family. Now there were days when we simply ate diluted flour because nothing else was available. When I finally got better food my teeth had all gone soft from not having anything other than diluted flour to eat. PRDP was operating but the roads (to Dushanbe) were closed and so supplies were held up. I would wake up each morning and face another hopeless day with nothing to do. I went periodically to the PRDP offices and other places to see if there was anything I could do but there was no work. It was hard to keep motivated, even to get up and shave or do something with the day. I was in touch with friends from the Ukraine who were telling me to come out there where they could support me with space and help me out until I could find a job.

Note: did not need to ask about AKDN's arrival. Information was volunteered so I let it flow.

Ten days before the Imam's visit, it was that same kind of morning and I suddenly got a phone call from M A. He wanted me to be ready to go to Ishakashem because they were expecting a helicopter there to do a rehearsal before the visit and they needed me to translate. It is interesting how this was a turning point for me and was instrumental in my employment. They needed someone who knew about flying and knew English and could deal with the technical translation as well. We went there, MA picked me up from the road where he was already waiting when I got dressed and shaved and went out, and we went to Ishkashem. Everyone was anticipating this helicopter but then we got news that it was not coming: the weather was uncertain. MA and the others went back and left me there. And then the helicopter suddenly arrived and before we could even go there to help guide it, it had landed. The chief pilot was Mustapha. The weather was still bad so the decision was to stay in Ishkashem for the night and go on to

Khorog next day but when the pilots – who were from Pakistan – saw the internat (boarding schools) facilities, no water etc. they did not want to stay there. So Mustapha decided to go to Khorog that day and I went with them. On the flight we talked and I translated the instructions from the flight control in Khorog to help the helicopter land.

For Khorog that was something new to see a helicopter. I was assigned to be with the pilots for the rest of those ten days. I translated, we talked, and if they needed any logistics done then I took care of it. There were 3 pilots 2 engineers and 1 technician. And they were my responsibility. They were happy with what I did for them and when they realised that I was volunteering all of my services (I was happy to have something to do) then they asked for my resume which they forwarded to Hakim Feerasta with their recommendation. But nothing came of it. By September I was thinking of leaving. My brother had gone to Dushanbe. When I was called one afternoon from the AKDN office saying that H F wanted to see me and could I come at 5 p.m. I got there and I was feeling giddy (faint) as I sat in the chair being interviewed. You can ask H. I was gripping my chair like this from stress. N gave me water and tried to make me relax but I just sat like this (indicates sitting rigidly upright on the edge of the seat, arms gripping the sides). After our conversation H asked me to get some information on a small enterprise development project. But before that, I forgot to mention that in August I had secured a job with the government as the officer for the youth committee with responsibility for finding enterprises for youth. So when I was called to the interview with AKDN I was in a dilemma again. I had a job: I should not give it up and just abandon it. And yet I needed the AKDN job as well. I had the information ready for next morning but I had also decided that if was offered a job I would refuse it and stick to the job I had. I talked about my dilemma and my decision with one of the other members of the (youth) committee who was an old man and he just told me 'Are you crazy? How can you refuse this job? Take it! If you don't I'll be most upset with you.' He actually helped me to change my mind. Hakim looked at the information I brought him and asked me to translate it. I said I could do it but had no access to resources to do so. S/He asked how I would organize the information and I had already thought about this: name, address, brief description of the company, human resources, product etc. S/He then offered me

the job. I told him I needed a day to resign from my government job and then could start straightaway. I did not even negotiate a salary!

As part of the job there was an exchange of experience visit to Pakistan for government officials and I went out there as a translator. I met Financial Promotion Services Kenya Enterprise Development Unit people. The job (in Khorog) was to revive a shoe factory and I was given 4,000 usd to see how this could be done. I had to learn everything on the job: how to write financial reports (I learnt from comments or questions posed to me when I submitted something) how to procure what was needed, trips to Osh etc. But we made the shoes and returned the grant and even made a small profit. The shoes were not the best quality but it was the first time that the shoes were made here. Then in the spring of 1996, S A (expatriate) came here and later in the summer M (expatriate) came in as finance manager. May 1996 was the first time we got desk tops here. Of course when an expatriate comes then he has priority so I lost my desk, he took my computer and that is how it was. But by then J (another expatriate) was here from March: we had to go to get her and C (another expatriate) from Osh. In the autumn of 1996, Najmi arrived and after a few days he asked me if I would work as Admin manager. That is the position I had when you came here. N (country director of AKF before a CEO position was created) must have watched my work and made the decision very quickly.

How did you know about your faith and the Imam?

With respect to MHI (Mowlana Hazar Imam), my paternal grand parents always prayed the dua, the old one, since I was a child. My grandfather passed away when in 1982 and my grandmother in 1990. But I think they knew that it was no longer MSMS who was the Imam. When I was in the Ukraine in 1990 we had news of the Imam and people told us he was not a bearded Mullah and when R K and N A and R first came to Khorog we were amazed that the Imam's representatives wore Western suits and spoke English. And when I was on holiday in 1993 and looked at the photographs and found the Imam to be smart

and handsome and in western clothes, I was amazed. But the Russians had always allowed us to practice our traditions so long as we did it quietly. I think the reason Chirag e Raushan (ritual to mark death) is at five a.m. is because it was quiet at that time and you could do things while the government officials slept. I think they also had a hidden agenda. They felt that as long as they let us keep our traditions then we would be good citizens. They trusted their systems to alert them to anything that might worry them. In fact the khalifas (religious leaders) were appointed by the government and they paid a tax from their income to the govt. Government officials knew what was going on with the rituals but they looked away.

Do you think the community has changed? How?

In the community things are desperate because of: (counts on fingers)

Loss of status

No job opportunities

The community's health is deteriorating: we now hear of diseases that were not there before

The education levels are falling. We have some good people: Y, D Y, K, M A, MS I, who are rising fast and doing well in the system. They came from the districts. But if we now go to find their equivalents in ten years time, it will be hard. We will not find such people in the districts any more. This generation still had some of the old schooling: the new one growing up has very little. The conditions in schools are bad, teachers are leaving and how many children can the core schools cater for? And how many parents can afford the Lycee? In the soviet times all children had access to a good education. What AKF can do is not enough and it cannot cater to all schools: that is too expensive. But already when we interview for scholarships we cannot give them out to enough students: the standards are just not there for them to study in Moscow or Bishkek.

In 1993, the population had risen from 56.000 in 1956 to 206.000; the land in 1956 and now is not much different. And in 1956 our grandparents could hardly survive. There are other changes: the Russian border guards have begun withdrawing and the withdrawal will be complete by mid-next year. The Chinese are now coming to Khorog. These changes will bring new people to us: the Afghans and the Chinese and will change the nature of the people and of the economy. I think we will see people leaving Badaskshan in the next few years. You need to look at the history of the encounters between Tajik Badakshan and Afghan Badakshan. It makes interesting reading.

Appendix 4: Interview transcript

Meeting with S, June 4, 2004.

What education and life was during Soviet times. (What was it like when you became a)

I had worked as a teacher only for 3 years in the Soviet time and my salary was 230 - 250 rubles, with which I could afford to do complete repairing of my house and even wanted to buy a car for myself as just an ordinary teacher. The life was very good at that time. Although we had law, newspapers, magazines, in short we were provided with all information but there was shortage of something. And there appears one question, why managers did not fulfil their tasks? Which shortages did the directors have? I think these kinds of things didn't occur (to us) frequently. And one more thing we faced with was the strictness of government. For example. I was the teacher of History and there came somebody from government and started to ask why the tie does have red color? Or another example, my father was a teacher also and during the summer holiday he was always sent to work somewhere, because teachers should work in the village, kolkhoz. And I think that decreased their motivation in some point. Although my father was a famous teacher, he had rank; he was an exemplary (role-model) of education.

However, now there is more freedom but the quality of life is a little bit difficult.

About management in education currently (How is it different now?)

As I said there are provided all instructions but the directors do not carry out their tasks. I am thinking on this question, why? Which shortages do they face with? Although they have law, instructions and I gave them this...(different support teaching materials) and this... So I don't understand, what should I do in order they would search themselves? For me it is also new.

I noted that (educational) management is very interesting and also new for them. In Badakhshan when I started with A, I remember for example O and O* were also very active listeners. I told them if you pass this course you will do a good career (laughing) and they agreed.

Note: both O and O have now moved up the government system now.

About changes s/he initiated which s/he is proud of?

I liked it very much when me, N and G gave lecture in Dushanbe last year. It lasted for 24 days and there participated doctors in management, some people with Master's degree and senior lecturers of central IPD. At the first time they did not understand us, when I read the paper even J and I (senior management at IPD and AKF) were also a little bit scared. The issue was - how should the adults learn? Muallim (teacher) Iskandarov was an aged person and he asked me why should adults learn and not youth? They carried the issue to another side. But later when we slowly explained the types of management and leadership, who is manager and so on, they got so interested and involved in our lecture that if I and G or N said "Uh" (when I got tired) they wrote it. There was a strong audience, it was the first time I felt that we are respected. They told me that we had everything you taught us, these are all from our usual life and we faced with them every day but why didn't we implement them. For example. We have Councils in our schools but we did not pay attention to these ordinary things.

The audience respected us very much.

We started to conduct the management courses from the year of 2000, when A came so I have learnt by heart the book I am using for these courses. This year for the first time I was asked to conduct a course at UCA. The audience was different there, because they came to courses voluntary. There I totally changed my curriculum because they new English, Russian and Tajik languages better than me. The only thing they didn't know so well was management. They (for about 15 persons) had known too much information. So I had to change my method of teaching (games I used during the courses), every day I taught them new things in order not to lose my respect.

Volunteers information on how they work at IPD

At present time at IPD I think there is no need for managers/leaders on some of activities, for example. I do my job in here, N does her/his job and J does her/his one but everyone tries to bring any innovation in his activities. I am sometimes ashamed (in front of) of youth, because of lacking knowledge in English. But there are some things that I know better like management in schools. When I was

in Dushanbe we met also people from the Ministry of education and I always disputed with them on various issues, even on hiring and discharging employees, because it is also kind of management.

Anise, I should tell you one thing. The Badakhshan society is more democratic than the other regions of RT. When I conducted management courses I had discussion with O, J and K (Regional educators in Badakhshan). The latter was like a friend also, s/he was never afraid of arguing. There was also discussion with the directors of districts educational departments. But when I was in Dushanbe, when the director of city educational department entered the room he was welcomed like God. When I finished the lecture he told me that Shahtutjon, all the things you are teaching us are very good but our community is not ready for it yet, the time is different. But for one year when we worked with IBET program and this year, when I met them I noted some changes, they told me that they could do some new things.

But there are some difficulties (just between us) I think that deal with (are related to) the Ministry. You know, not all its staff are democratic yet. Last year when we worked in Badakhshan Khojaev came to see our activity and he said that why do we need management and leadership? Although he could not understand the differences between these two things very well. Some of them have the bureaucratic psychology yet (still). It is not a secret, when we conducted courses in Dushanbe one man asked us that what management is, is it marketing? They have such ideas for example. They just wanted us to talk about the government's laws, council and things that like. Do you remember as we did when you came the first time and we argued about what should be published in "Rahnamo" and you didn't agree to publish some manuals. I was angry with you at that time. And now I understand why you did not allow us to do those things that time. It is the government's duty to publish its laws but I have nothing to do with it. Now I am working for "Rahnamo" (the newsletter) and I publish articles on management and leadership only. For the heading "Management" in Rahnamo I try to write new things about leadership and management that I feel could be useful for school directors. I try making them to search and bring new things. But the government law is available, there was allocated fund for it but they do not disseminate it.

Two days before there came the MSDSP representative asking us to conduct courses for its staff. Do you remember the first time A and I conducted “the world bank” course?

(Me) Yes, it was the first external course (outside of IPD).

And they also decided to continue this course in Dushanbe. They have just got money for that.

Sometimes I compare Dushanbe with GBAO. I have many acquaintances in there. The most famous school there is, let us say, the Presidential Lycee (the Turkish-Tajik lycees are not considered, they have mostly their Turkish policy). When I was there and as I observed they have good salary, the school is very well designed but no one from their staff has passed the professional development courses. We conducted courses on new interactive methods and they even published an article about this in their own newspaper. Three deputies of the lycee’s director attended our courses and they were amazed, they said that they got lots of new things. They have a good director but the only thing is they do not understand the management as a science. Before we thought that management improvement depends on one’s experience only.

About responses to change and the relationship with Regional government:

In 1999 the government was not so strong; it did not governed so well. There were two types of governors: some of them did not believe in progress, and they did not cared too much about their work. The other group understood and believed in future. Some people supported communistic ideology. I think you remember when the first time we conducted courses and K said to A that who is Kurt Luen and where his ideology is practiced. A was a smart one and he always said: “As it was mentioned by muallim S ...” because S could say something that would destroy everything. But we cannot compare O with S, as O participated in management courses; s/he was a school director and also worked in IPD in the Soviet time. S/He would not say anything before analyzing it but s/he is stricter. I am not scared of her/him, if there is something I do not agree with him I can argue. SHe also knows that in community there has to be freedom. But as a manager I should respect her/him we have one goal and we are in the same boat.

If we take Kulyab (another region) or the Ministry itself that is different, it is difficult to argue with them and to explain what this is and what that is. You probably remember when K (a well-respected expatriate working during my time) went to the regional education department to explain them our programs before. When s/he came back from there s/he did almost cry. We had to change our programs partially according to government requirements. But when they saw the results of courses they had changed their opinion. We even forced them to participate in our courses. Those who participated in our courses did change their thoughts. There was one inspector from Khatlon Valiev, he is at the same position as A is in here (deputy regional director), so he participated our courses and said to us that there will not be any problem with you anymore, whenever you want to come you could letter me and I will assist you in everything I can.

This year we were in Dushanbe and met Zarif Sharipovich. We asked him to read lecture in "Finance and management" course for two hours. After that he proposed us to conduct these kinds of courses more frequently. Or for example. Lutfulloev during the meeting with AKF CEO mentioned that Khorog IPD is one of the best IPDs in Republic of Tajikistan. And he also asked AKF to assist the IPDs in other regions. The AKF CEO was very content and notified him about the activities already started in Kulyab and Kurgantube.

About changes at IPD and its management:

Before, when we started our activities together, the IPD staff had their own meetings and AKF's their own. Every Monday we had meeting with J reporting about our plans for the week. That time the number of the IPD stuff was less than at present time and therefore could meet her/him more frequently. But now I see her/him randomly and main manger is J2, most of time I meet with her/him to discuss our activities. But sometimes I talk with J on Council issues, even if s/he has not time to meet me. But now the components got more independent. For ex. Before M and I were managers in government staff but all our activities we discussed with J. But now it is different, we solve almost all the policy of our component independently and propose it. If somebody asks me for conduction course I could negotiate with him independently except financial issue, which is in J's hands and that is our policy. J is not scared of sending me to Dushanbe talking to the Minister, his deputies or AKF management. We have not problem

on these issues, when some organizations do. J gives us freedom in negotiating with the regional governments. The only issue I am arguing with J is giving me time to work on my research. S/He promised me 1 month holiday in May but did not. There is not enough time for self development. I have talked to J and H on this issue; I said that it is their fault that I do not know English. When they ask me to do my work I do it, but I have also my own life I have to study a little more. I think they should pay attention more on this issue.

And one more thing I should criticize in your work also, that is you paid much attention on English language and hired people with this knowledge only, although they had no idea about pedagogy. You are an educational specialist and you know not everybody could be a teacher. And now I think some of the IPD staff is unnecessary, I would not like to name them. Because they know English but have no ideas on pedagogy. They could not facilitate, even though it is not so difficult but they have no willing. I discussed on this issue with J also. In government staff they have not this problem, You remember when you were as a jury with K and S there? A1 and B2 were elected for the primary component. Both of them were good teachers at that time. D1 and K2 did not know English but they are very good at their profession and we also provided assistance for AKF at that time. Because mostly these people satisfied the teachers during conduction of courses. There was shortage of materials and you remember we had prepared little textbooks, which were the first sources that satisfied the needs of teachers.

ITREC sent 2 persons from his staff to KEP every year to learn English and now the whole staff speaks English but IPD didn't. I don't know why. It would be very good, because we don't want to go to London, we would like just learning English.

Relationship between IPD and Government.

Before K told me not to join IPD, they will have no progress. Nobody believed in IPD's future. Now we are recognized, even the Minister of education says that we have Khorog IPD, because we conduct courses, write textbooks and many teachers come to participate in our courses. No event or meeting could be conducted without IPD representatives, for example now there have been working on the 3rd reform.

About what changes came from the presence of the AKDN in education and in general

I think the changes in curriculum came from AKF, because that was the time when in Tajikistan there was the Civil war and I didn't know anything about curriculum. As a government employee of that time I can say that there was shortage of information in Soviet Union, for example, (about) the events of Hungary in 1956, events of Czechoslovakia in 1967, the relationships of Russian in Poland, Baltic states: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania.

I taught History from the textbooks of Soviet time. In 1990 Roza Maria brought me a book from Russia that was written by...(names an author). Reading that book I started to analyse differently. AKF also provided new information on interactive methods, management and curriculum. Curriculum has been started recently and I am not quite informed about its development.

Before we had a teacher in IPD that collected all summaries and had used them in courses from 1930 till 1990s. But now J2 and I have been changing it for one year.

There was lots of innovation from AKF side, basically it was informational provision. But I cannot say that it was disseminated completely and that is not enough yet. But we can see the changes in people's thinking and their belief in future.

I have one (other) book here written by ..(names an author) and it is written in Russian. This book was given me by Davlat Khudonazarov and it is about the management in schools' development.

About changes in the community

Community has been already changed. Before there were only teachers, peasants and workers but now have appeared merchants, businessmen and etc. Some people became quite rich and some very poor. Some years ago most of people had no hope in future and some of them thought that it is useless to study in Tajikistan and education does not play any role in here. But then AKF started its activities, HH provided us with humanitarian assistance, some people were

sent abroad for studying and some other people found good jobs and it brought a big change in community's life.

About the 3rd reform in GBAO education department

I don't know too much about this reform, but it was started very well by K. He talked to IPD's staff and there were also involved members from AKF but for some reasons it was suddenly stopped. Niyozmamadov (the then Governor of Badakhshan) also gathered representatives from IPD and government and asked them to prepare the reform. But there is one shortcoming in OBLANO's activity which is the feeling of dependence on Centre. Before we made decision independently, for example. The reform of 1996 and 1999 and I think they can also do it now. I do not agree with them.

When I talked to O in Dushanbe I found out that he has very good ideas.

Relationship between AKF and IPD

I do not know too much about it, because in this room M and I from government and N and other from AKF and in some issues we work together and in some separately. But in general the activities have not been changed and we our policy is almost the same.

And I do not know about the previous system but now it is quite the same. Basically, the AKF is acting as a trust (in former USSR, a group of industrial or commercial enterprises with centralized direction).

IPD determines its policy and activities itself, and I think only in terms of relationship with government it works together with AKF.

What was the most difficult change that IPD had to do, you had to do?

I think it was being patient, because life was hard. We lived far from the town and had wretched salary (7 somoni).

I think it was very difficult to unite AKF and government, where F had a great contribution. Before they proposed to decrease the number of IPD staff partially, J and I had to check all components to know their opinion about this. It was really difficult; when AKF staff came to here we were not prepared psychologically also.

If we take our component, then I was already acquainted with N and J, so as we had worked in MLTP and research and we had been already prepared for it and we knew that we could work together. But in other components it was not the same. For example if in one component one gets 100 \$ and another works for 7 somoni, it is quite difficult psychologically, believe me. But the donors and government did not understand it. If someone asks me for which organization I am working, I could not answer him, because I get 15 somoni from government and 100 \$ from AKF. But which boss pays more I am his servant (joking).

It was difficult to divide the staff into core personnel and non-core but now the psychology of people has changed and they know that they should work, for example. If I am not able to conduct courses, what I am doing in IPD then? And I understand that J can discharge me if I do not work and he is not scared from trade union or someone else.

About the council and committees.

We did mistake in election of people for planning committee (E, N, ,M), because they had never worked in this area. On my opinion, we had to elect the leaders of components for planning, because it is their hand and they can do it in one day and it is better for IPD also not wasting time. But last year E and N did it during three months, because they did not understand it very well.

Or for example. We elected people like S and A, who were always busy with their work in OBLANO and had no time to come to IPD. I think it is better to elect the main person from IPD and 1 from OBLANO and 1 from government for perspective planning.

The Council serves as a consultant for J and s/he could quit its activities as the Head at any time s/he wishes. But I think in the future the Council will become, independent, because as I know in West institutions the councils are functioning independently. In Soviet time the schools had councils but their activities depended on the intellect of their chairpersons. If they wanted to attract people they could and it depended on their facilitation. Democracy existed in books but it was not implemented.

About the future of IPD?

IPD has to be the centre of information provision and professional development. And it has also to become the centre of science and research, there should be conducted more researches. Some commercial activities should be increased, because we have computers and other materials. IPD is quite small now, we have not enough space to conduct all courses in here but there are about 318 schools in GBAO. Therefore we cannot satisfy all their needs and I think we have to extend it.

I fought with government on some issues like planning, when I was the school director. But I was not alone because the collectives I worked with were very active and progressive.

.....

Extracts from a second meeting at my home with the same respondent. There is some overlaps in questions but also much elaboration. This is an extract only. The full conversation ranged much wider

Me: What do you see as the future direction of IPD?

You are asking me what the future of IPD is but I can't answer this question. We don't have a strategy for IPD as yet. A had to conduct one more course, on strategic planning but he did not. He left before doing that. What I would like to do is what A did: to create a new management course of my own. You know, Mawji Gul did one very good thing. She conducted a needs analysis among the criminal community in Khorog and then she created a course on bringing up (upbringing) in the family which is very good. This was innovative. But in other components I don't see this. IPD simply does the same programs again and again. Se started something and it is still being used. Once we had a heated discussion in our component. N was saying 'why not use what A left us' but I disagreed and felt that we should add new elements. Now much of what Ahad developed has changed.

When we go to other parts of Tajikistan they question us as to why we are using Western methodology because we also had 'Soesat Noma' I also draw from the Soviet experts like Sukhomlinsky, Makarinko and others. But in other

components things have not changed. For example D B got /his/her masters from IED but there is not much innovation in his/her programmes.

Also more on professional development frustrations

I had a meeting with H to talk about doing a three month English course in Dushanbe. H understands the need for the course but is not sure that AKF will see the logic of this because donor funding is now for a Masters degree only. They keep saying there is the money but then, we do not seem to have the professional development we need nor the time to engage in professional development for ourselves.

Me: Yes, that is partly why G is heading that component (without an M.A). I think G has used new things but s/he is tired.

G is very good. She did not go to IED but she can really do what is needed. But yes, she is tired. She has a big family, she can't be with them, she lives with relatives, she gets home late at night This is Pamir and a woman coming home late at night, its not easy. They say that she gets more money but it is still difficult.

In management we have a concept 'organisational culture' and H should pay attention to that as well. At present in IPD the motivation is very low. People are getting salaries but more attention needs to be paid to motivation, to the cultural context.

You asked about IPD's future direction. I would like to see the council electing the IPD director and that director then choosing his deputies.

Me: Why is the council not so functional?

H does not focus on it too much. I don't think he thinks it is important. The planning committee also is not very good. The good people left and the others are not planners. We need to have the heads of the components in that committee.

But J is caught between two organizations: AKF and then the Hukumat.

Me: Looking at what you know about management, what would say the management of IPD is like? What gaps do you see?

If you ask me where the management gaps are then I would say that where J needs training is in facilitation and motivation. Motivation at IPD is totally lacking at present. S/He could also do with a stress management course for himself.

J grew a lot when F left and one good thing that F did was to teach A. A was a great help to J when the salaries had to be negotiated. J also has vision when we worked with you we worked without money but J kept telling us it would get better and so we stayed. S/He could find another job himself, s/he has a masters degree, Her/his English is okay, but s/he stayed.

H too has a lot of pressure from above and it is hard for him. He is a good listener and he accepts ideas. Also he is stressed too and we get changes in direction about 4 times a day. It is not her/his fault. S/He is on the phone to I and N for ages each day. It was simpler in your time.

We need to develop local people, to send J for training. It's important. When we are in other areas of Tajikistan they ask us whether we have our masters or not. That is the culture here. The management should be thinking about our professional development. But I find that I have to think about it myself.

Me: H is not going to stay here forever though.

Yes, why are we not developing local people? It is in the plan and we are told that we have the money. In your time too there were weaknesses. You took B to Pakistan and then again to Moscow. Why not A? Okay, she could not have gone to Pakistan because she did not have English, but why not Moscow? These things are noted.

And another thing in your time that was not right. We did not know about budgets and neither did A. Things were much more open once you left. But also at that time, IPD was not so independent perhaps. You also took people with little experience. They are good and great at the English but they don't know the system and then when they are faced with experienced people who do know the system they are stuck. It is fine to take young people but then you should put them through the system for two-three years so that they can work properly. That was a weakness.

J is a good leader but he is stuck between AKF and Hukumat. IPD is not yet totally independent. I myself am not afraid of AKF or of donors. Because we work, we can show what we have done, where the weaknesses are and they will support us. But with government it is different. They can just make decisions without looking at all the issues or consequences. That is I am afraid of and it makes things hard for J too.

Confidential talk about someone about to leave the IPD

You know N is going to leave?

Me: You'll find it hard without her.

I'll find it hard to work without him/her because we worked very closely together and my workload will increase, but I told J that we need to develop someone else then to take his/her place. You can't keep people here against their will.

Talk about other people

R was a clever woman/ man, s/he was older, like F. When s/he first came, s/he observed what we did. And s/he saw where our weaknesses were. For instance s/he realized that we were not using the computers really well and s/he said he would organize computer courses for all of us. S/He saw where our gaps and weaknesses were. So when I took he/him our monitoring reports s/he said 'these are good, very good and comprehensive. But do you think they will be better if we ask these two other questions as well?' S/He said s/he would not touch our programmes because they were fine but would begin something new in January. But then there was some problem with the family and s/he left.

Leadership: why s/he had refused the deputy position during my time there

Bureaucracy is the deputy's job; you can't develop your specialism and keep having to write report after report. Also I feel that the heads of the components are like receptionists now. They are always running from meeting to meeting and I watch J2 do this. That is why I did not want to be a deputy. It was also financial. Now look at M. He was a very good specialist but now he is always stressed. And now he has left the position! He will stay at IPD but not as a deputy. Being a deputy is not so interesting. I can't use my fantasy/creativity in that position. M was a good facilitator before. Also, if we sat in a meeting without English then

how would I feel? Once I have the English I will be a deputy. I've worked more than J2 so if I can have the three months...

If one is a leader then they should motivate other staff and they have to talk to staff with a smile. The IPD is not kholkhoz. When I do my work now I can gather materials for my thesis. I know all the top people. I'll go to work at central IPD...as a deputy. (laughs) I know Tamirova. (at the Central IPD)

About sustainability

We are good with courses and so we can conduct (fee attracting) courses in Afghanistan and Bishkek. But It is not good to run after money. We must look at quality. It will take our children to run IPD.

Appendix 5: Selected Journal Entries

From Field notes April-July 2004:

About data collection

'Had a meeting with S at home and got some very interesting insights into the IPD. Main problem: motivation and s/he talked about N leaving and about how s/he felt about becoming a deputy. Afterwards s/he told B that s/he wondered if s/he had said too much. The interactions over dinner or lunch at home are so different from those at IPD where people pretend to misunderstand you when they do not want to answer a question or are trying to avoid saying something. It's a clever tactic and R used it when I was trying to thank her/him for working with B when S refused to. S/he simply pretended that the conversation referred to me and so I let it go.'

Reflections on what I am doing and its implications

'I am worried about my data. I have very little on the IPD in soviet times and I keep making the mistake of asking about changes since I left so that I have not got a long view from a lot of people. Need to change that. What sense will I make out of this data and what do I do about my methodology? I think one thing will come out clearly is that my own involvement could not be ignored, B has a role to play too. It is also clear that I do have to use the fact that I know the programmes and the personalities and have key informants in more senses than one. Also the senior management ambivalence towards me has simply made people feel more supportive and so given me more leeway than I would otherwise have had in some senses. And the honesty with which I have been held to account too has to be talked about in the thesis.

My focus has shifted from looking at responses to change to looking at...what? People interactions and the growing pains of an institute that is good at what it does but is struggling to bridge the management gap within itself? I know the cultural context a bit better but I do wonder why people do not realise the collective power they have coming from a system that spoke so much of collective power.

About feelings about expatriates

'....It is also so obvious how they feel when they are respected and trusted and given that openness that F and R (both expatriates who are now gone) seem to represent for them. They respect technical skills but are now also beginning to see when they do not get anything from an expat. They may not be able to provide it themselves but they recognise experience and lack of it when they see it. They can tell that a R both respects them and knows her/his job and likewise with F, and they respond to that much more positively. M said something today about how we in the West had had more experience in report writing 'than us in the developing world as you now call us'. S/he talked about F giving people hope and how s/he had promised things. Some people said s/he had promised too much but M felt that s/he had delivered what s/he could of her/his promises. S/he also said that F's name would always be remembered in IPD.

I think the issue is one of belief and of hope which keeps motivation alive and all that goes with that. J managed that well during the tough times but now seems to have lost the knack. And hope is what has made this community survive through some pretty difficult times. So how to talk about that in this thesis?'

More on data collection and corroboration

'Glad I checked my information with Z. S/he had said that A had misled me which I had suspected. S/he also talked about how a head teacher had felt so empowered after an IPD seminar that Z had been able to pull back her/his budget from the Hukumat and how now they were beginning to see a cadre of independent-thinking head teachers. I wondered why AKF had not taken up the government's idea of an itnernat and asked if s/he felt that the government would have moved head teachers to bring in a more dynamic one had AKF asked them to: s/he was not sure '

About lack of documentation

It is interesting to note what documentation is *not* available at IPD.. There are no reference documents on the historical development of the IPD and no documents on medium or long-term strategy that I am aware of. Nor are there any donor reports available. They need to document their own history and how they are evolving. It would also be interesting to see if the library does have the range of teacher support material that is produced at IPD for ease of reference. The institution is still in transition with respect to these developments.

It is also clear that IPD needs to review its documentation status both with a view to better organization (consolidated binders do not have a contents page or follow a systematic subject or date related format. Minutes of meetings do not have action items or deadlines for follow up and lack the analysis that is now asked of the staff when they write reports. Nor do minutes have an 'any other business' item on the agenda nor reflect any debate over issues.

About IPD activities

Since my arrival a month ago, IPD has been engaged in the following activities;

- workshops for UCA on educational management
- selection of candidates for IED
- preparation for a training of trainers course and a Visiting Teachers course to be held on May 31st
- an orientation visit to Karachi for senior government educators with the institutional development adviser at IPD
- workshops on MTRC in Vanj (Mobile Training Resource Centre)
- continued development of curriculum frameworks
- production of Rahnamo (local newspaper for teachers)
- inspection visits to various parts of Badakhshan
- monitoring of one allied school
- a quarterly meeting with AKF and other partners on the IBET grant
- a range of other meetings with AKF and with government as well as internal work meetings

There seems to be so much going on!

Some reflections on IPD and on what I am finding

There is no doubt that IPD has grown in status and in responsibility. The leadership is rising to the many opportunities and challenges that this sudden and accelerated growth brings. Notable changes in the last two years include those set out below. The IPD has:

- Taken over implementation of AKF education programmes
- Integrated what used to be AKF staff with IPD staff
- Weathered the considerable difficulty of creating a cadre of people who are regarded as 'core' staff and dealt successfully though perhaps not painlessly, with the issue of the massive salary discrepancy between IPD and AKF staff
- Begun to engage in its own professional development
- Created a favourable profile for itself through working in the areas of teacher training, curriculum enrichment and educational management outside Badakhshan and with other IPDs. Both these last moves are unprecedented in the history of IPDs in the country

There are also issues connected with this rapid expansion:

- The relationship between IPD and AKF is still evolving and remains unclear. At one level, IPD is a grantee but it is not a fully-fledged grantee and major strategic directions and issues continue to flow from AKF (**Note: analyse what this means with respect to response to change both within IPD and with respect to AKF's changing role**)
- The institution is straddling dual - and sometimes conflicting - mandates: one arising out its public education role, the other from its move towards a private, donor funded institution (**Note: how does the IPD respond to this change in its status?**)
- The systems and structures that should allow for the smooth running of a donor-funded institution are not yet in place. Their absence has served to inhibit the development of an overall

coherence at the IPD (**Note: is this a change or evidence of a state of transition?**)

- Institutional development in this context has a number of interesting challenges to contend with which need immediate attention (**Note: the very different development of MSDSP as an institution and IPD as one. Look also at the nature and scope of the two institutions and how they have evolved if possible.**)
- IPD is expanding in activity but whether it is growing in its own understanding of its role, direction and future is still to be assessed (**Note: is IPD's focus on this or on other equally pressing issues and how does it balance both demands, that of the need to establish internal systems and that of delivering on programmes?**)
- The decision-making, levels of consultation and of choice are unclear (**Note: is this because I do not have enough access to the processes or is this also evidence of the state of transition?**)
- It is not clear as yet what the IPD's institutional development priorities are or how they fit into its planning over the next year or two.
- There is clearly a more open style of leadership which is more consultative and to some extent more democratic. The confidence to either challenge decisions or to accept responsibility is still being built. It is interesting – and a characteristic not confined to IPD staff alone – that those mentored to promote change, are themselves the last to change or to venture into new areas.
- In general, dependency is recognized but not faced head on. There is a recognition amongst some educators that there is a limit to how far support can go and that at some stage it is also necessary for educators to take charge of their own learning

.....

Reflections on some continuities

'Continuity is evidenced in the strong sense of social responsibility at the IPD and in general in the community. The use of social networks for mutual support and the building of social capital is still strong. There is a change in social relations: people no longer give as freely and as readily as they did even in the most difficult of times when the least bit of food that any family got was shared by all amongst all, but the appeal to social ties and responsibilities still holds strong.

Contextually, the opening of the road to China is serving to end the isolation of Badakhshan, an isolation that was often seen as a disadvantage but is now suddenly also seen as a means of preserving the status of the region. (The fear is that of too little land, of competition and of the clash of cultures. The opening of the road is not the only concern. The opening of the bridges across the river and withdrawal of the Russian border guards is also a source of anxiety for the population. D is not the only one worried about those bridges.

Economically the area has grown considerably. There is much construction of houses and small shops have mushroomed and are thriving in the small town. House prices, always a good indicator of economic growth particularly in a situation in which foreigners are not able to buy homes and so inflate the price, have tripled partly as a result of the generous compensation paid by UCA in relocating the people on its site.

Appendix 6: The distilled impressions from the first field visit that I shared with the participants on my return

- **There was an increase of bureaucracy between AKF and IPD and a divergence of both perspectives, and vision.** The power dynamics was an issue. IPD was responsible for implementation but had no control over budgets. AKF engaged in attracting funds for IPD but with insufficient consultation and input from the senior and particularly the middle management of IPD.
- **There was an expectation of a shift from accountability to government to accountability to a grantor and to donors.** This required a huge paradigm shift with respect to understanding agendas, setting strategies and vision and aligning programmatic activities to these that the IPD senior and middle management found difficult
- **The level of support by AKF to IPD varied because of the geographical as well as human distance.** This created a myriad of misunderstandings which came to haunt both institutions.
- **There was tremendous growth and confidence in programme implementation at the middle management level.** The struggle was with the fact that there was no time or opportunity for reflection. People found themselves caught in 'doing' rather than being able to either think about what they were doing or frame it in a coherent, strategy. There were too many changes in direction
- **Staff began to look for intrinsic work satisfaction and future development.** With remuneration that was now adequate to their basic needs at least, staff could focus on other aspects of their work and careers.
- **Staff integration had been undertaken successfully**
- **There is not yet sufficient internal (democratic) change**
- **there is a constant change in direction both within IPD, from AKF and from AKDN** (when it could not decide whether it will support the IPD or not).

Appendix 7: Grouping responses to find themes

| Change | level | Nature/type of change | impact | Communal response/action |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Imposed change. Break up of FSU | Societal level | Political, economic, ideological. Tajik independence, market economy, | Civil war, economic collapse, break down of state-citizen trust | Confusion, community cohesion, |
| As above | Educational level/Regional and district and school level | Economic/ideological. Salaries unpaid and devalued. Piece-meal, rapid 'reforms' e.g. introduction of fee paying classes, curricular changes | Erosion of material base, English and IT prominent. Switch of careers. Loss of status | Loss of teachers, drop in ed. standards Alternative occupations: bazaar, renting homes etc. |
| As above | IPD | Downgraded, | Loss of budget, near-halt in activities | Despair, erosion of credibility, status. Demoralisation |
| Invited change His Highness asked for help. Note: but ideas about forms of 'help' differed | Badakhshan community | Arrival/intervention of AKDN | Humanitarian assistance, land privatisation, rural programmes, health and education 'rescue' mode | Hope, pride, feeling of being saved, total reliance on AKDN but some uncertainty about some AKDN activities |
| Negotiated change: AKDN and community | Community/AKD N level, setting up of Lycee | Moving from relief mode to development mode | Targeted and selective aid, move to some self-reliance | Anger, circumvention confusion. Later acceptance of responsibility for self-reliance |
| Negotiated change: IPD/RED | At IPD level/ Regional level | 1. Restoration of institute status and new charter, | Broader mandate, closer AKF-IPD relationships | Hope, growing confidence |
| Negotiated change: | At the IPD/AKF level | 2. Closer AKF-IPD interaction: AKF | More | Total |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--|--|--|
| AKF/IPD. Note 'negotiated' but not always equal partnerships | At the IPD/AKF level | implementation staff moved to IPD 3. Grantor AKF–Grantee IPD, public-private institution. Some reservations at regional level about why only IPD? | autonomy from Govt. Improved material base. More 'NGO like' operations and responsibilities. AKF transferred budget each quarter | dependence, tension, overwhelmed with new learning on operations, feeling unguided, imposed upon, pressured, individual resistance, overt and covert |
| Negotiated change: Note: from a position of strength | At AKF/IPD level | Localisation of AKF CEO position. Expats as consultants not managers | More equal AKF IPD partnership. Full budget transfer | IPD empowered. But is nepotistic, overworked, less consultative |

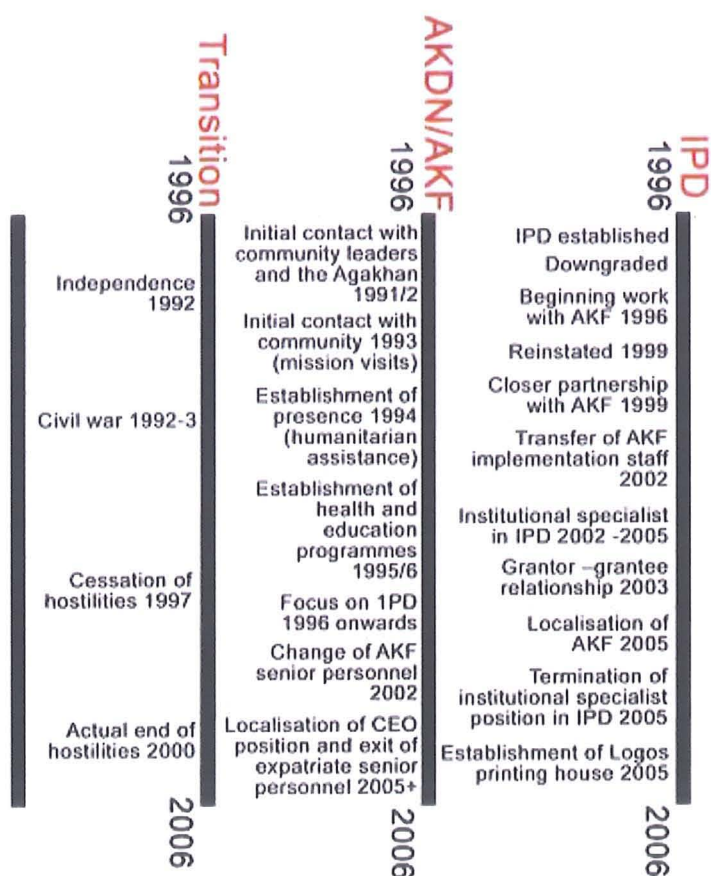
Notes:

The circumvention was to honour clan relationships so aid shared evenly at village level even when targeted.

These initial themes were subsequently re-grouped and refined to give the current sub-headings in the chapters and included a consideration of continuity and change (e.g. the IPD hiring practices, current management practices, the use of position to promote clan or family members' interests) as well as profound changes (e.g. the confirmation of the faith, the shift in values)

Appendix 8: Landmarks, Transition, AKDN & IPD

LANDMARKS



Appendix 9: Consent letter

Invitation to Participate in the Research Project

I am a doctoral student at the Institute of Education, University of London. The focus of my study is how educators in Gorno Badakhshan make sense of educational change in the context of post-soviet Tajikistan. This study is needed for me to fulfil part of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

Through it, I hope to explore with you how you think education has changed since the soviet times and how you, as an educator, have adapted to that change. I am interested in understanding how you make sense of, negotiate and deal with the various new policies and practices in education that come from Central government, how you work with the AKF and how you deal with the realities that teachers in the classrooms bring to you. I am also interested in what the collapse of the Soviet Union has meant for you in your personal life and how that impacts your work as a professional educator. I believe this is an important study for a variety of reasons:

- It may provide an insight into the challenges and opportunities for educational reform or change as you, the educators of Badakhshan see them and experience them in your lives and in your work
- It could help to deepen the understanding between you as Badakhshani educators, the central authorities and the AKF about how to manage educational change
- It may give you a chance to think about what must change and what should be retained in education
- It may provide an opportunity for you to reflect on your own principles and practices, beliefs and habits that guide your actions as educators and as members of the Badakhshan community
- The collapse of the Soviet Union has resulted in enormous changes in your lives. The study might help me in understanding how you have managed to cope with your dramatically altered situation in your personal lives, in your professional lives and as a community
- The study might also help us explore together how best to prepare for a future in which you are bound to see yet more change in your lives and in education

On a broader level this study might help to:

- conceptualise and provide a framework for understanding educational reform in societies undergoing major economic and political transitions

- provide a basis for comparing educational reform in other settings and challenge, enrich or extend the conceptual and theoretical frameworks in relation to the role of educators in effecting educational change
- re-thinking the approach to institutional development and educational change in Tajikistan
- explore the challenges of conducting qualitative research in this context

But this will only be possible with your contribution to my enquiry. I am a teacher educator who has worked in a variety of contexts including Canada and Tajikistan on educational reform, anti-racism and the education of minority groups. In order to conduct this research I would like to interview you and observe you at work. With your consent, I may want to tape the interviews so that I may listen to what you are telling me rather than be distracted by taking notes. I would then translate and transcribe the interview and let you look at it again to see if you want to elaborate or change anything you have told me.

The interviews would be conducted with complete confidentiality. The translations would be coded to ensure that your identity is protected and I would not quote you on anything without your express permission. If you are not comfortable with taping the interview then I would not use the tape –recorder. Even if we do use it, it can be switched off at any time during the interview at your request. If you are uncomfortable with any part of the information then we would discuss it to see how it can be presented so that its importance is retained but your concerns are addressed.

While I am conducting the research, I would be happy to provide any informal help that might appropriately be provided should you wish me to do so. It would help me to have you comment on what I do and how I do it so that I may learn how the research process is experienced by you. All your comments would be very welcome and I expect you to ask me as many questions as I ask you if you so wish. This material will only be published with your explicit consent and the data you provide me will only be shared with my thesis supervisor and kept in a locked cabinet.

Finally, I would like to stress that this is not an evaluation of you or your institution and that no information will be used to judge your work or your performance by anyone in any way. All educators who agree to participate in my research are free to withdraw at any time they wish. I do hope, however that you will feel able to help me with this study.

Thank you